TUESDAY
January 27, 2026

BENGALURU
CITY EDITION
14 Pages ₹ 6.00

THE HINDU

www.thehindu.com

INDIA'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1878

https://newsth.live/fb
https://newsth.live/x
https://newsth.live/ig

RNI No. KARENG/1970/49945

Vol. 57 • No. 22

Printed at » Chennai » Coimbatore » Bengaluru » Hyderabad » Madurai » Noida » Visakhapatnam » Thiruvananthapuram » Kochi » Vijayawada » Mangaluru » Tiruchirapalli » Kolkata » Hubballi » Mohali » Malappuram » Mumbai » Lucknow » Cuttack » Patna

FAILED ATTEMPT

NSS decides against SNDP ties in Kerala

SOUTH » PAGE 5

BIAS ALLEGATIONS

Uproar grows against UGC's campus equity regulations

NEWS » PAGE 10

2024 VIOLENCE

Three police officers get death penalty in Dhaka

WORLD » PAGE 12

EMPLOYMENT GUARANTEE

A game of hide and seek

There is little substance in arguments for replacing MGNREGA

EDITORIAL » PAGE 6

HIL CHAMPION

Kalinga Lancers pip Royals, clinch title

SPORT » PAGE 13

NEARBY

'Govt. schemes reached 1.37 cr. families last year'

BENGALURU
Stating that the guarantee schemes have empowered families financially, Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot has said that 1.37 crore families in Karnataka have received direct financial benefit during 2024-25. » PAGE 4

Flower show draws over 8 lakh visitors

BENGALURU
The Republic Day flower show at Lalbagh , centred around celebrated Kannada writer and thinker K.P. Poornachandra Tejaswi, attracted over eight lakh visitors and generated close to ₹2.75 crore in revenue.

» PAGE 2

National spirit

Power point: An Indian Air Force squadron of Rafale, MiG-29, Su-30 MKI, and Jaguar aircraft fly in the special 'Operation Sindoor' formation during the 77th Republic Day celebrations on Kartavya Path in New Delhi on Monday; left, a tableau of the defence forces at the parade. SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

REPORTS ON
» PAGE 9

India, EU close in on FTA as negotiations conclude

Both sides set to announce conclusion of talks as PM Modi and EU leaders, including chief von der Leyen, hold summit today; deal approved by both sides, final text to be ready after 'legal scrubbing'

Suhasini Haidar
T.C.A. Sharad Raghavan
NEW DELHI

A "successful India" is in the world's interest, said visiting European Union (EU) leaders who attended the Republic Day parade on Monday, as officials here confirmed that negotiations for the EU-India Free Trade Agreement (FTA) have been concluded.

"Official level negotiations are being concluded and both sides are all set to announce the successful conclusion of FTA talks on Tuesday," Commerce Secretary Rajesh Agrawal told presspersons on Monday.

Separately, sources in the Commerce Ministry said that negotiations were concluded on Friday and the deal was approved by both sides on Saturday. They added that the final text would be readied once it was "scrubbed" by the legal teams of both sides.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi receives EU chief Ursula von der Leyen at the Republic Day celebrations in New Delhi on Monday. ANI

The announcement is part of a number of other agreements, including a security and defence partnership, energy cooperation and a mobility agreement, expected to be signed during the EU-India summit on Tuesday to be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, and European Council President Antonio Costa.

The EU leaders on Monday witnessed the 77th Republic Day parade where India's military hardware and marching contingents, particularly those involved in Operation Sindoor in May 2025 against Pakistan, were showcased.

The presence of the EU's top leadership "underscores the growing strength of the India-European Union partnership and our commitment to shared values", Mr. Modi said in a social media post.

"A successful India makes the world more stable, prosperous and secure," Ms. von der Leyen said in a post, adding that the world's largest democracies Europe and India are committed to shaping "a new global order".

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 8

Canadian PM denies FTA plans with China

Associated Press
TORONTO

Mark Carney

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said on Sunday that his country had no intention of pursuing a free trade deal with China. He was responding to U.S. President Donald Trump's threat to impose a 100% tariff on goods imported from Canada if it went ahead with a trade deal with Beijing.

Mr. Carney said his recent agreement with China merely cut duties on a few sectors that were recently hit with tariffs.

The Prime Minister said there were commitments not to pursue free trade agreements with non-market economies without prior notification under the deal it had with the U.S. and Mexico. "We have no intention of doing that with China or any other non-market economy," Mr. Carney said. "What we have done with China is to rectify some issues that developed in the last couple of years," he said.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 8
'PM LIKELY TO VISIT INDIA'
» PAGE 8

State may set up panel for Gig Workers' Welfare Board today

Rishita Khanna
BENGALURU

The State government is set to move ahead with the formation of a Gig Workers' Welfare Board, with a committee likely to be set up by January 27 to work out the details. The government has decided to levy a welfare fee of 1% to 1.5%, with a cap, on aggregator platforms.

"The State government will levy a welfare fee of 1% to 1.5% on aggregators," Labour Minister Santosh Lad confirmed to *The Hindu*. He added that the welfare fee will vary across sectors, with cab and transport aggregators treated differently from food delivery and other app-based platforms and will be calibrated based on each aggregator's business model.

The relatively low levy is aimed at ensuring a steady welfare fund for gig workers without overburdening the platforms, Mr. Lad said, adding that meeting was conducted with all major platforms and decision was taken considering all the valid concerns.

The board will have 15 members, with representation from the government, gig workers, aggregator bodies and civil society K. MURALI KUMAR

As per the Karnataka Platform based Gig Workers (Social Security and Welfare) Act, the welfare board will have 15 members, with representation from the government, gig workers, aggregator bodies and civil society. The government will be represented by five members, including the Labour Minister, while gig workers and aggregators will have four representatives each, along with two members from civil society. The government has finalised the list.

The government has decided to levy a welfare fee of 1% to 1.5%, with a cap, on aggregator platforms

Once the welfare fund begins to receive contributions, the welfare board will assess whether the amount collected is sufficient to provide social security benefits to gig workers. If the funds are found to be inadequate, the welfare fee may be revised upward, up to a maximum of 5%. The fee is designed to vary across platforms to reflect differences in scale, revenue patterns and modes of operation, rather than applying a uniform rate to all aggregators.

Draft State rules

The Labour Department had recently released draft Karnataka Industrial Relations Rules and is scheduled to publish draft State rules under the Code on Wages, the Code on Social Security, 2020, and the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020 (OSH Code) on January 27. The move, officials said, is aimed at operationalising the four central labour codes at the State level by laying down a uniform framework governing wages, industrial relations, workplace safety and social security across sectors.

Seven feared dead, several missing after fire guts warehouse complex in Kolkata

Shiv Sahay Singh
KOLKATA

At least seven persons were feared dead, and several others remained missing after a massive fire broke out in a warehouse complex in the Anandpur area of Kolkata in the early hours of Monday. No official confirmation of casualties was issued by the administration till late in the evening.

The fire broke out around 3 a.m. As many as 12 fire engines were pressed into service, and firefighters battled throughout the day to bring the blaze under control.

Several people were trapped inside the warehouse when the fire spread rapidly through the premises. Some of the victims reportedly made frantic phone calls to relatives, saying they had no way to escape.

Burned down: Fire services personnel battling the blaze at a manufacturing unit at Anandapur in Kolkata on Monday. ANI

By evening, the firefighters said they had located seven charred bodies inside the premises, though formal identification and official confirmation were awaited.

A warehouse of a popular food chain and another operated by a local decorator, both located within the same compound, were gutted. While three people were present inside the food chain's warehouse, nearly 20 workers were inside the decorator firm's facility when the fire engulfed the complex.

Most of those who were inside the warehouses remained untraceable.

Relatives of the missing workers gathered outside the site throughout the day and later lodged missing complaints at the local police station.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 8

Man killed after being dragged by car, friend arrested

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A 34-year-old man was killed in the limits of the Hebbagodi police station after being dragged by a car driven by his friend following a violent altercation between the duo, on Sunday night.

The victim has been identified as Prashanth, a resident of Veerasandra.

According to the complaint, Prashanth and his friend, Roshan, 33, were behind the M5 Mall, where a cricket match was being played. After the match, the duo reportedly consumed alcohol at the ground.

An argument reportedly broke out between the two over a cigarette lighter, which escalated into a physical fight. Roshan allegedly assaulted Prashanth with a beer bottle, who also retaliated. During the scuffle, Roshan sustained injuries.

Later, when Roshan attempted to flee in his car, Prashanth reportedly clung to the car door, refusing to let him escape. Despite this, Roshan allegedly continued driving at high speed along the Veerasandra-Kamasandra Road.

The police said the accused deliberately crashed the car into a tree and later into a compound wall in an attempt to knock off Prashanth.

Due to the impact, Prashanth suffered severe injuries and died on the spot.

Initially, the incident was reported to emergency services as a road accident. However, upon detailed examination, the investigation revealed that it was a case of murder.

The entire sequence of events was captured on the car's dashcam, which served as a crucial evidence. The accused was arrested within one hour of the incident. According to the police, the accused is from Udupi and was working as a software engineer at a private firm, while the deceased was unemployed.

A case has been registered at the Hebbagodi police station.

Congress Lok Bhavan Chalo today

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In bid to seek a rollback of VB-G RAM G Act, the Congress will hold a Lok Bhavan Chalo protest on Tuesday to petition the Governor against the repeal of the MGNREGA Scheme.

Meanwhile, BJP MLA and former Minister S. Suresh Kumar has questioned the propriety of the ruling Congress itself staging a protest on Tuesday and making its legislators participate in the protest instead of attending the legislature session.

FULL REPORT ON
» PAGE 4

Abhishek: where fearlessness meets consistency

The thrill-a-minute opening batter has proved to be unstoppable in the shortest format, especially in recent times. His ability to go ballistic from ball one while being among the runs regularly has made him an X-factor in the India T20I set-up

Method in the madness: Abhishek is clear in his head about what he wants to do and how he wants to go about his business. The opener is fortunate to have the full backing of the leadership group of Suryakumar and Gambhir. EMMANUAL YOGINI

THE GIST

- Players go through an entire T20 international career without hitting 76 sixes; Abhishek averages nearly three an innings in the last 14-and-a-half months
- Abhishek became India's second-fastest T20I half-centurion in Guwahati, easing to that milestone off just 14 deliveries
- The southpaw is rapidly on his way to becoming the 20-over batting equivalent of Bumrah

With Rohit and Kohli retiring in the immediacy of the World Cup triumph, there were two opening slots up for grabs, and Abhishek's century in his second T20I had given him a headstart. Within a year of his debut, Abhishek surged to the top of the ICC T20I rankings for batters, displacing his opening partner at SRH, Head. The left-hander has made the not-so-easy appear straightforward, and is now indisputably the most feared opener in the world

R. Kaushik

Fearlessness. It's a great trait to espouse, but not always the easiest to embrace. When fearlessness translates to breathtaking outcomes, it is hailed as a virtue, a masterstroke. When it results in one's downfall, especially early in the innings, the same 'virtue' can become a millstone.

It takes conviction, therefore, to continue to place faith in that quality even in the face of odd failure. Easier said than done, of course. Unless one is Abhishek Sharma.

It's a little shy of 19 months since India were crowned T20 World Cup winners for a second time, in Bridgetown. Abhishek wasn't in the squad; he had made his way into the larger scheme of things after a breakout season with Sunrisers Hyderabad in IPL 2024. But with even the likes of Yashasvi Jaiswal and Shubman Gill struggling to get a look-in once India decided to push Virat Kohli up the order to partner Rohit Sharma against the new ball, Abhishek knew he had to bide his time.

Fortunately for him, that biding wasn't a long process. Within a week of the World Cup triumph, India travelled to Zimbabwe for a five-match T20I series, under first-time skipper Gill. Abhishek's international debut was inauspicious as he courted a four-ball duck after opening the batting alongside his captain and his dear friend. Retribution was immediate; Zimbabwe were punished for their impunity in the very next game when the left-hander clattered to his maiden century off just 46 deliveries. His second fifty came off an incredible 13 balls, with three fours and five towering sixes. This fella, he was quite something.

There have been numerous false dawns in Indian cricket, but Abhishek most certainly isn't one of them. In no time, he made himself indispensable, with his intrepid ball-bashing that wasn't built on a wing and a prayer. With Rohit and Kohli retiring in the immediacy of the seven-run heist against South Africa at Kensington Oval, there were two opening slots up for grabs, and Abhishek's century in his second T20I had given him a headstart. How spectacularly he has built on that.

Within a year of his debut, Abhishek surged to the top of the ICC T20I rankings for batters, displacing his opening partner at SRH, Australian Travis Head. They say that it is easier – not easy, just easier –to get to the top than to stay there. Abhishek has made the not-so-easy appear terribly straightforward, and is now indisputably the most feared opener in the world. And he is only 25.

Putting on a show

Let's return to fearlessness, just for a brief while. After kicking off the five-match series against New Zealand with a scorching 35-ball 84 in Nagpur on Wednesday, Abhishek was dismissed first ball in the next outing. The bigger-sized arena at the Shaheed Veer Narayan Singh International Stadium in Raipur consumed him, as much as anything else. The first ball he received, from Jacob Duffy, was well within his hitting arc, a shot he has mastered through hours of toil in the anonymity of practice sessions. Full and on his pads, it begged to be deposited over the fence. Abhishek obliged with his trademark aerial flick with a flourish, and even though he timed it well enough, it didn't have the legs to clear Devon Conway on the square boundary on the leg-side. Conway had put down a similar offering from Sanju Samson at the same position off the first ball of the contest, but Abhishek wasn't as lucky, trudging off disconsolate after making no contribution to what in theory was a stiff run-chase of 209.

You'd think a first-ball dismissal would force most batters to at least be desperate to get off the mark with a cheap single in the next outing. But Abhishek has shown in the last year and a half, if not more, that he is nothing like 'most batters'. And therefore on Sunday, in Guwahati where India were confronted with a modest target of 154 to clinch the series at the first time of asking, he charged down the track to his first ball, also from Duffy, and drop-kicked it over long-on for the most outrageous of sixes. In the previous over, Ishan Kishan, the pint-sized dynamite, had elicited an admiring, defeated smile from Matt Henry after dismissing him for a six, just two deliveries after Samson had been bowled first ball. Duffy wasn't in a similarly obliging mood, though after the match which ended with an Indian win with 60 deliveries to spare, he almost snatched Abhishek's bat to check for 'springs' or some such illegal aid that helped propel the ball to long distances.

Twice in three matches now, New Zealand have felt the full fury of Abhishek's scything willow. Batting first in Nagpur allowed him to blast 84; a modest target in Guwahati meant the large gathering had to be satisfied with an unbeaten 68, which came off a measly 20 deliveries, with not a single dot ball in the equation. Despite the first-ball blob in Raipur, Abhishek now has 152 runs for the series at an average of 76; he has smashed 12 fours and 13 sixes, largely responsible for a staggering strike-rate of 271.43. And he has done so with supreme nonchalance, hardly seeming to hit a ball in anger even though it has sailed miles up in the air and multiple rows back in the stands.

Before the bat-grab, Duffy had been treated to the most extraordinary shot perhaps inflicted on him. Abhishek's penchant for giving himself room to go over the off-side is well known, and he possibly gave his hand away by leaving his crease just a little too soon as the tall Kiwi began to load. Duffy bowled a full ball well outside leg-stump, taking pace off it and therefore not only cramping Abhishek for room but also asking him to make his own pace. A majority of the batters would have patted the ball back, the slightly more inventive ones tucked it around the corner for a single. But as we have come to realise, Abhishek operates on his own terms. He still managed to make enough room to free his arms and drive the ball, silkenly, over cover for the most mellifluous of fours. Duffy's jaw hit the ground. He had bowled the perfectly acceptable ball, done everything he could to make scoring difficult, and Abhishek had effortlessly one-upped him. Just doff your hat and retreat to the top of the mark, Jacob, Duffy told himself, and enjoy the entertainment, even if it is at my expense.

India have been spoiled rotten by Abhishek's pyrotechnics. Only twice in his last 26 T20I innings has Abhishek failed to touch double-digits, and his slowest innings when he has crossed 10 is 19 off 14 against Australia in Canberra in October, when he scored at 135.71. His *slowest*, we repeat. In these 26 digs, he has slammed eight half-centuries and a remarkable 135, off 54 deliveries, against England last February. He boasts a strike-rate of 200 or more seven times, peaking at 340 on Sunday. There have been 102 fours and 76 sixes in that period, including a staggering 13 of the latter in that Wankhede decimation of England alone. Players go through an entire T20 international career without hitting 76 sixes; this guy averages nearly three an innings in the last 14-and-a-half months, against South Africa, England, the UAE, Pakistan, Oman, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Australia and New Zealand, in South Africa, India, Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Australia. What are you made of, Abhishek Sharma?

The soft-spoken young man who has been mentored by Yuvraj Singh, himself a no mean six-hitter, has been consistent to a fault in T20Is despite his propensity to go after the bowling from the off. In 35 innings, he has beautifully married a high average of 38.39 with a bruising strike-rate of 195.22; eight half-centuries have been complemented by two centuries, 119 fours buttressed by 86 sixes. All of these combine to present the picture of an unabashed destroyer of bowling attacks, but they don't even start to do justice to his impact and the electricity that is as much a part of his kitbag as his punishing willow.

Like mentor, like mentee

Yuvraj has been a wonderful ally for several of India's young batters across generations. In his playing days, he took Kohli and Rohit under his wings. He helped the latter emerge unscathed from a trying phase in the immediacy of Rohit being overlooked for the 50-over home World Cup in 2011. Post retirement, he has spent a lot of time sharing his knowledge and wisdom with young charges in his home state of Punjab. Notable stars to have emerged from the Yuvraj stable, so to say, are Gill, Abhishek and Prabhsimran Singh. Gill has gone on to become the Test and One-Day International captain while Abhishek is making his mentor proud with his sustained exploits in the T20 ecosystem.

Abhishek became India's second-fastest T20I half-centurion in Guwahati, easing to that milestone off just 14 deliveries. It's fitting that the man he idolises and to whom he owes a lot sits atop that pile; Yuvraj's 50 off 12 deliveries against England in Durban in the T20 World Cup in 2007, during which he smashed six sixes in a Stuart Broad over, remains the quickest half-ton by an Indian. Abhishek might get there one day and if and when he does so, no one will be more delighted than Yuvraj. After all, what will give a master greater satisfaction than being bested by his pupil?

Abhishek doesn't play for records, milestones or numbers. That's not even on his radar because otherwise, how will he be able to consistently take on and dismantle quality bowling attacks? He is secure in his mind, clear in his head about what he wants to do and how he wants to go about doing it, and he is fortunate to have the unquestioned backing of the leadership group of Suryakumar Yadav and Gautam Gambhir. Within the Indian group, he is rapidly on his way to becoming the 20-over batting equivalent of Jasprit Bumrah. How about that?

Republic Day flower show at Lalbagh sees 8L visitors

It has generated close to ₹2.75 crore in revenue; last year's Republic-Day flower show, themed on Adikavi Maharshi Valmiki, had recorded a total footfall of 4.75 lakh visitors

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A view of the Glass House at Lalbagh Botanical Garden in Bengaluru, during the Republic Day Flower Show celebrations on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Republic Day flower show at Lalbagh Botanical Garden, centred around celebrated Kannada writer and thinker K.P. Poornachandra Tejaswi, attracted more than eight lakh visitors and generated close to ₹2.75 crore in revenue, the State Horticulture Department said.

The flower show was held from January 14 to 26, as part of Republic Day celebrations. Last year's Republic Day flower show at Lalbagh, themed on Adikavi Maharshi Valmiki, had recorded a total footfall of 4.75 lakh visitors and earned the Horticulture Department a revenue of ₹2.3 crore. On the final day of the event, family members of Kuvempu and Tejaswi visited the flower show. This year, a bookstore was also set up on the premises, featuring 54 titles authored by Tejaswi. The stall recorded sales of over 13,000 books during the exhibition, including 3,800 copies of *Carvalho* alone.

A total amount of ₹2.75 crore was collected during the event. Of this, over ₹2.46 crore was from entry tickets, while an additional ₹28,50,000 was collected from stalls, stores and other sources on the premises. The event saw a total footfall of 8,10,973 visitors, including 5,17,103 adults and 2,08,166 students.

Flower waste
The floral displays this year used approximately 35 lakh flowers sourced from across the State and outside. Of these, around nine lakh flowers used for decoration will be converted into compost and organic manure. The manure will be reused for cultivation within Lalbagh itself, reducing waste and promoting eco-friendly practices, officials said.

Quiz held to deepen Constitutional awareness among students

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

C. Subramaniam, former Minister for food and agriculture, turned his residential lawn overnight into a farmland to prove that the Mexican variety of a crop could be grown in India.

This move became an important chapter in a significant movement that India witnessed later. Any guesses what the crop was and which is the movement being referred to?

Wheat and green revolution

Here is another one. Who were the first parliamentarian couple in India? If you do not know the answer, here is a clue. Former Indian President K.R. Narayanan was the couple's nephew.

The answer is Dakshayani and Raman Velayudhan. In fact, Dakshayani Velayudhan was the only Dalit woman to be elected to the Constituent Assembly.

These were among the many questions asked at the grand finale of the first edition of the nationwide Constitution Quiz held by #ReclaimConstitution, a citizens' collective, with the aim of deepening Constitutional awareness among students.

Students of Shri Ram Centennial School, Patna, emerged as winners of the Reclaim Constitution quiz. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The event also saw the release of a pocket edition of the Constitution of India by former judge of the Supreme Court Abhay Oka

Six finalist teams
From the six finalist teams, students of Shri Ram Centennial School, Patna, emerged as winners. Jyoti Public School, Lahli, Haryana, were the runners up.

Pocket edition
The quiz held in Bengaluru culminated after a closely contested preliminary round which saw participation from over 1,600 students from more than 200 schools across 20 States and five Union Territories.

The event also saw the release of a pocket edition of the Constitution of India by former judge of the Supreme Court Abhay Oka.

Talking to the students about the importance of developing a scientific temper, Mr. Oka said, "Unless you develop scientific temper, you cannot live a dignified and meaningful life. Scientific temper is testing everything around you on the basis of science. You can't forget that we have made progress only with the help of science."

He added: "By saying superstitions are bad, you are not acting against any religion...No religion can survive without reforms."

Philatelic exhibition
The event also witnessed a first-of-its-kind philatelic exhibition titled "Makers of Our Constitution". A curated collection of rare postal stamps, covers, cancellations, and archival materials were showcased at the exhibition.

Other guests of honour at the event included journalist P. Sainath, former Ambassador to UNESCO Chiranjiv Singh, and Special rapporteur to the United Nations Ashwini K.P.

Indian history video series to be launched

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Historically Tempered Collective will launch 'Indian History, Thali by Thali', a video series, at Sabha BLR on Tuesday.

History
The 15-episode video series will explore different periods of Indian history through the lens of food. The short videos spanning eight to fifteen minutes target youngsters between the ages of 12 and 16.

"We have already released two. One more will be released at the event and the next one in about a week," said Janaki Nair, senior historian and a member of the collective.

Engaging format
The videos, produced in an engaging format, feature conversations with professional historians.

"Given the way a very large number of people are interested in speaking about history lately, even if they're not necessarily professional historians, we felt we should intervene. We wanted to do it in a popular and accessible format," Ms. Nair said.

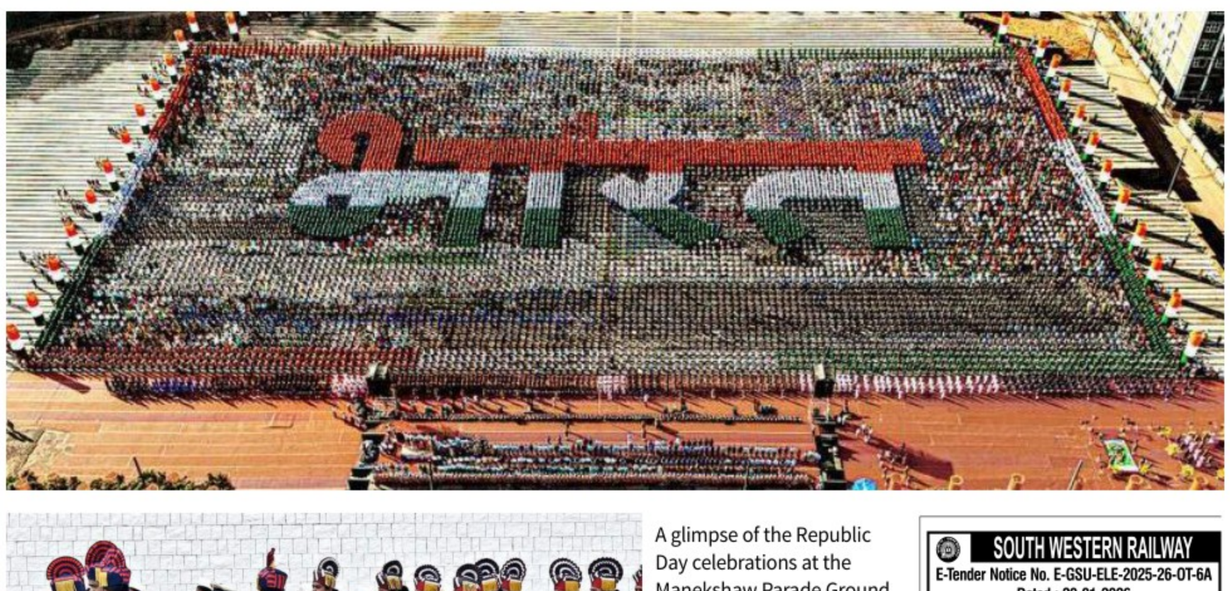
"While most experts who are speaking in the videos are very senior, they also include a few younger and fresher voices. Therefore, we have been able to communicate in very direct and simple ways," she added.

Before the launch event, a workshop will also be held for school teachers.

"The workshop is to look at how to use these videos in creative ways. Without teachers, we feel, this might not be something that youngsters will actually look for. So, we need the intervention of teachers to take it forward," Ms. Nair said.

The event will also feature a panel discussion in which, apart from Ms. Nair, Meera Iyer, convenor at INTACH Bengaluru chapter, Saisudha Acharya, nonfiction author and educator, and Ajay Cadambi, educator, will participate.

There is no entry fee for the event.



A glimpse of the Republic Day celebrations at the Manekshaw Parade Ground in Bengaluru, and at Moodbidri in Dakshina Kannada district, where a large group of students of Alvas institution formed the work 'Bharat', on Monday. SUDHAKARA JAIN/ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Families displaced of Kogilu Layout observe 'Poor People's R-Day'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Families rendered homeless after the demolition of houses at Fakeer Colony in Kogilu Layout, Yelahanka, by government authorities on December 20, marked Republic Day by holding a 'Poor People's Republic Day' demonstration on Monday, highlighting their continuing demand for rehabilitation and housing.

The families were promised that houses would be allotted to them by January 2 by Minority Welfare and Housing Minister B.Z. Zameer Ahmed Khan, but no actions followed.

The programme was organised by a coalition of trade unions, women's groups, student organisations and progressive collectives.

'Remain united'
Slum Mahila Sanghatane members requested residents to remain united and stressed the importance of education for children, while Dudiya Janara Vedike leaders referred to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's vision of equality enshrined in the Constitution.

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
E-Tender Notice No. E-GSU-ELE-2025-26-OT-6A
Dated : 20-01-2026
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders for the following work:

Name of work	Approx. Value
OHE Modification Works in Connection with The Proposed Shifting of Points And Crossings at Bengaluru Cantonment Yard	Rs. 1,55,30,559.48

Last date for submission of bids: **Upto 11:00 Hrs. on 11-02-2026**
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Keep visiting the website for any corrigendum till closing date
Deputy Chief Electrical Engineer, Gati Shakti
PUB/845/AAF/PRB/SWR/2025-26 **Unit / Bengaluru**
Download the UTS Mobile App from Google Play Store for ease of booking of unreserved tickets
South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRAILWAYHQ | sw_railways

PUBLIC NOTICE
This notice is issued on behalf of my client Sri.Mukesh Bhandari owner of Site No.25 & Sri.G.Vinod Kumar owner of Site No.20 to bring to the notice of the general public that the Original Sale deed dt.10.05.2004, Doc. No.2865/2004-05 of Book I and CD.No. BASD58 and registered in the office of the Sub-Registrar Bangalore. Sale deed dt.26.11.2004 Doc. No.21384/2004-05 of Book I and CD.No. BASD 113 and registered in the office of the Sub-Registrar Bangalore. Sale deed dt.21.05.2010 Doc. No.774/2010-11 of Book I and registered in the office of the Sub- Registrar Bangalore in respect of Site No.25, measuring 1806 Sq.ft., & Site No.20, measuring 1260 Sq.ft., situated at Doddathoguru Village, Begur Hobli, Bangalore South Taluk, From the above Original Sale Deed has been lost at the time of travelling.
All the persons are hereby informed not to deal or carry out any transaction with anyone on the basis of the said Sale deed. If anyone has already carried out or being carried out kindly inform the undersigned in writing on the below mentioned address within 7 days from this present along with that Police Complaint is also given vide Lost Report No.2027361 & 2027368/2026, dated 26.01.2026.
Y. Sowmya Yadav, Advocate
Samvruddhi Legal, # 83, Ground Floor, 5th 'A' Cross, 21st Main, J.P. Nagar 2nd Phase, Bangalore-78. **M : 9916343921**

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
E-PROCUREMENT (IREPS) TENDER
NOTICE No. HE-24-2025-26
The undersigned, on behalf of the President of India, Invites E-Tenders (IREPS) for the following works:

SL	Name of work	Approx. Value
1	Electrical Arrangements for the Proposed construction of Type-II, 12 units Staff Quarters at Kulem.	Rs. 25,10,099.00
2	**Sub Work - 1:-** Electrical Arrangements for the Proposed construction of Type-II, 12 units Staff quarters at Castle Rock (CLR). **Sub Work - 2:-** Electrical Arrangements for the Proposed construction of Type-II, 6 units Staff quarters at Sonalium.	Rs. 36,74,682.00
3	Modernization of signaling system by provision of Electronic Interlocking System at Kariganuru & Papinayakanahalli Stations under SSE/Sig/Hosapete Section.	Rs. 51,08,761.80

Last date for submission of bids: **Upto 11:00 Hrs. on 20-02-2026**
For details log on: www.ireps.gov.in
Senior Divisional Electrical Engineer General /Hubballi
PUB/848/AAF/PRB/SWR/2025-26
Download the UTS Mobile App from Google Play Store for ease of booking of unreserved tickets
South Western Railway - SWR | SWRRLY | SWRAILWAYHQ | sw_railways

CLASSIFIEDS MART
TO ADVERTISE VISIT
www.thehinduads.com
CALL: Bengaluru: 98455 29981 • 080-22071826
Mangaluru: 0824-2417575 • 2417580
Hubballi: 0836-2338600 • 2335700

PERSONAL
CHANGE OF NAME

I SREE Samarth S/O B Surendran born on 16/8/2012 residing at 5A Surya Nilayam MICO Layoout Begur Bengaluru, have changed my name to S Sree Samarth vide affidavit dated 21ST January 2026 At Bengaluru.

I, Sweta Kumari, W/o. Ram Ranjan Kumar R/o. (Flat No-L507, Ittina Mahaveer Apartment, Electronic City Phase-1, Bangalore - 50100) that I have changed my name to Sweta Srivastava for all future purposes.

I, Nazeeruddin Ahmad S/o, Qutubuddin Ahmad R/o Flat No FF 102, Sims Heritage, Jhanavi Road, Hrbr Layout, 2nd Block, 4th G Main, 1st Cross, Kalyananagar Post, Bangalore - 560043 have changed my name to Naziruddin Ahmad for all purposes.

I, Habeeba Banu B, D/o. Syed Zainullah Buddin B, R/o. 58/384-15-2-5, Hanuman Temple Backside Street, Akkayapalli, Kadapa, Andhra Pradesh – 516003, have changed my name from Habeeba Banu B to Syeda Habeeba Banu B for all purposes by an affidavit sworn before Ramaswamy Public Notary dated 03.01.2026.

PERSONAL
CHANGE OF NAME

I, ROBERT Babu Livingston, s/o; Babu Livingston Albert Israel, r/o: No–391, Vibuthipura, 1st Cross, Marthahalli, Blr – 560037. Have changed my name as Robert Babu.

I, RAVISH Kumar, s/o; Charnjee, r/o: No–4152, Tower 4, Sobha Lake Garden, SY26, Bharathi Nagar, Blr–560049. Have changed my name as Ravish Jasuja.

I, Padmasree, D/o. R Sankara Rameswaran, R/o. A-102, Kingston Legacy, TC Palya Main Road, Bangalore - 36, Shall henceforth be known as Padmasree Sankara Rameswaran.

I, Abdul Rahaman Shaik S/o, Shaik Sattar Saheb R/o No 56/227, Akkayapalli Cuddapah, Ravindra Nagar, Cuddapah Andhra Pradesh - 516003 have changed my name to Shaik Noorullah Basha for all purposes.

I SHRUTHILAYA S D/O B Surendran born on 26/2/14 residing at 5A Surya Nilayam MICO Layout Begur Bangalore, have changed my name to S Shruthilaya vide affidavit dated 21ST January 2026 at Bengaluru.

FRESH / RENEWAL OF REGISTRATION OF DEALERS FOR SUPPLY OF EXPENDABLE MEDICAL STORES ITEMS TO MILITARY HOSPITAL BELGAUM UNDER LOCAL PURCHASE FOR ONE YEAR 2026-27

1. MH Belagavi intends to register local vendors to purchase medicine and consumables (Med Eqpt, X-Ray, Lab Reagents, and Surgical Items etc). Interested Authorized Distributors / Stockists / Dealers of reputed Pharmaceuticals Companies can apply for registration for the Financial Year 2026-27.
2. Application forms for registration can be collected from Procurement Cell, Military Hospital Belagavi, and Karnataka - 590001 from **27 Jan 2026 To 7 Feb 2026 (08.00 AM to 02.00 PM)** on written request on firms letter head. Last date of submission of application form complete in all aspects is **28 Feb 2026 till (10 AM).**

Tele: **77429 91660**
Email: **milhospbgm.medicalstores@gmail.com**
Sd/-
Commanding Officer

Your feedback will keep us Cleaner, Sharper and Bolder
Call our toll-free number **1800 102 1878**
Or write to us at **customercare@thehindu.co.in**
Scan the QR code to register your feedback
THE HINDU | thehindu businessline | FRONTLINE | SPORTSTAR | The Hindu Young World | THE HINDU

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA, "e"- PROCUREMENT NOTICE
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF CONSTRUCTION ENGINEER, KHORDHA (R&B) CIRCLE, KHORDHA
WORKS DEPARTMENT
Tender Call Notice E-mail: rbcirclekhurda@gmail.com
Bid Identification No. CCE-Khordha (R&B) Circle - 11/2025-26 Memo No -71 Dt.12/01/2026
The Chief Construction Engineer, Khordha (R&B) Circle, Khordha on behalf of Governor of Odisha inviting percentage rate bid in double cover system in ONLINE MODE from eligible contractors for Road works as detailed in the table below:

1. Nature of Work : **Road Works**
2. No of Work : **2 Nos**
3. Tender Cost : **Rs.10000.00 (On-Line)**
4. Class of Contractor : **A Class**
5. Available of Bid document in the Website : From **10.00 AM of Dt.29.01.2026** up to **05.00 PM of Dt.12.02.2026 up to 5.00 PM**
6. Date of opening of Bid : **Dt.13.02.2026 at 11.30 AM**
7. The Bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the Website:**https://tenderodisha.gov.in**. Any Addendum / Corrigendum / Cancellation of tender can also be seen in the said website.

B-986 : **Chief Construction Engineer, Khordha (R&B) Circle, Khordha**

GOVERNMENT OF ODISHA
OFFICE OF THE ENGINEER-IN-CHIEF, RURAL WORKS, ODISHA, BHUBANESWAR
Letter No.2540, Dated : 22.01.26 Email i.d. : crew_bbsr@yahoo.com
"e" Procurement Notice for bridge works in Odisha (Online-03(Bridge)/2024-25 dt. .01.2026)

1. Name of the work : **"Construction of bridge work"**
2. Total No. of Works : **02** (Two) nos
3. Estimated cost : **Rs.1438.48 to 1620.04 lakh**
4. Class of Contractor : **"A" Class & "Special" Class as applicable.**
5. Period of Completion : **As mentioned in Column 7 of TCN**
6. Other details :

Procurement Officer	Bid Identification No.	No. of bridge works	Availability of Tender on-line for bidding From	To
Chief Engineer, Buildings & Bridges, Rural Works,Odisha, Bhubaneswar	Online-03 (Bridge)/ 2025-26	02 (Two) nos.	10.02.2026 at 11.00 A.M	26.02.2026 Upto 5.00 P.M

Other details can be seen in the bidding documents, which will be available in website **www.tendersorissa.gov.in .**
Chief Engineer (Buildings & Bridges), Rural Works, Odisha, Bhubaneswar
34001/5/2526 OIPR-34001/34002/1/25-26/0005

Reviewer burnout drives AI use yet human oversight remains crucial

In 2020, peer reviewers worldwide dedicated approximately 130 million hours to review work. This poses an immense burden to reviewers who are required to balance reviewing with their own academic and research commitments. This has led to STEM journals increasingly turning to AI for help

T.V. Padma

Shruti Kumar (name changed) is a professor at a medical research institute, working on diagnosing a neglected tropical disease that infects almost a million new people every year. Prof. Kumar said that with the increasing number of requests by scientific publishers to peer review research manuscripts in recent years, the process takes so much of her time that she has consciously decided to accept only requests that relate to a specific sub-discipline of her area of specialisation.

Indeed, as STEM journals rapidly expand globally and the pressure to publish more papers grows, the pool of qualified experts to review the papers is becoming increasingly strained, and top academic publishers are turning not to their peers but to artificial intelligence (AI) for help.

The global scientific community needs to experiment with alternatives to the peer-reviewed journal process. TANGERINE NEWT/UNSPLASH

Nearly 15,000 years

Professor Kumar said AI could help detect plagiarism: "Some publishers do percentage plagiarism checks before sending manuscripts to reviewers, saying for example, 40% plagiarism was detected with AI, and this is useful information for the reviewer and it cuts their time doing the same thing."

In 2020, peer reviewers worldwide dedicated approximately 130 million hours, equivalent to nearly 15,000 years, to the review process, according to Deeksha Gupta, director, global strategy for society programmes at the American Chemical Society. This poses an immense burden to reviewers who must balance reviewing responsibilities with their own academic and research commitments.

But "the peer-reviewed journal system has been unable to adapt to and provide a suitable system that can leverage AI technologies while controlling for downsides," per a recent paper published in *The Innovation*, co-authored by structural chemist Gautam Desiraju from the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru. The rate of annual data generation is outstripping that of the annually published number of academic articles, the paper added.

No replacement for humans

The global scientific community needs to experiment with alternatives to the peer-reviewed journal process "lest scientific productivity falls due to errors or oversight induced by AI-generated knowledge becoming accepted scientific findings," the authors added.

"While AI cannot replace human reviewers or make final editorial decisions, it can play a valuable supporting role," Dr. Gupta said. "AI-integrated tools can assist in accurately matching manuscripts with appropriate subject-matter experts and provide preliminary assessments during the prescreening stage. This ensures that only submissions of sufficient quality and relevance proceed to full peer review, thereby reducing unnecessary workload for reviewers."

AI can meaningfully assist in peer review but only when leveraged responsibly for bounded tasks, Shane Rydquist, associate vice-president, delivery and solutions, Cactus Communications Ltd., said. AI can aid researchers' workflows, allowing them to manage routine tasks such as literature searches and data organisation, identify subtle patterns in complex data, and surface unexpected connections between distant fields that a human might never encounter, he added.

Indeed, AI's role should be to augment human expertise, for example in checking plagiarism and integrity, as AI excels at detecting text similarity, image manipulation, and data fabrication patterns, Dr. Rydquist said. It can also help with screening, assessing submission quality, formatting compliance, aligning scope, analysing expertise, identifying potential reviewers based on their publication history, detecting biases by flagging potentially problematic or biased language, and identifying conflict-of-interest patterns.

Dr. Rydquist added that "the key is augmentation, not replacement".

Amplification risk

That said, one still needs human judgement in "evaluating conceptual novelty and significance; assessing methodological soundness in context; making nuanced judgements about appropriateness for a journal's audience; and providing constructive feedback that advances science," he added.

From a publisher's perspective, integrating such AI systems is still in its developmental phase, according to Dr. Gupta: "Rigorous testing and validation are essential before these tools can be deployed at scale."

But one concern raised in *The Innovation* paper is the risk of amplification of a mistake creeping into a machine-made summary, which could lead future authors to cite and proliferate the "fundamentally incorrect or misinterpreted science."

> LLMs have a tendency to over-represent highly-cited but potentially flawed work while underweighting newer, corrective research. This is why human oversight remains indispensable.
>
> **DEEKSHA GUPTA**
> Director, global strategy for society programmes at the American Chemical Society

This "will inevitably then reflect non-replicable papers, mostly without providing any clear indication of the same," the authors wrote.

'Not the only reliable source'

There are also biases in AI models that may be difficult to understand and control, like those stemming from choices of inclusion or exclusion in datasets, from assumptions in the algorithmic process, and from socioeconomic factors embedded in the operative institutions developing AI.

"Designing a system to counter this is a difficult, continuous undertaking for which the present peer-reviewed journal system seems ill-equipped," the authors added.

"We've already come across cases where people have used generative AI to inadvertently propagate false citations, for example, instances where large language models (LLMs) sometimes generate plausible-sounding but non-existent references, which can create misleading chains of evidence," Dr. Rydquist said.

When using any generative AI platform or tool, people tend to overlook that it may miss subtle technical errors that a human expert would catch immediately, Dr. Rydquist continued: "And LLMs have a tendency to over-represent highly-cited but potentially flawed work while underweighting newer, corrective research. This is why human oversight remains indispensable. Without critical evaluation, AI can quickly accelerate misinformation."

A December 18 paper in *Science* suggested that despite both the excitement and concern about using AI in academia, "empirical evidence remains fragmented" and the impact of LLMs is not fully understood. The paper showed that LLMs have begun to "reshape scientific production" and that the importance of English fluency will fall behind "but the importance of robust quality-assessment frameworks and deep methodological scrutiny is paramount".

"AI in its current phase of development is certainly not going to be the only reliable source to refer to and make decisions," Dr. Gupta said.

'Distinctly human territory'

With the evolution of intelligent machines, the intelligence of human beings, especially the experts and scientists, is going to be more valuable and we need to be cautious and careful on how to smartly employ these tools without biasing our concepts and fundamentals, she added.

A simple yet effective strategy to minimise errors in AI-driven data synthesis is to avoid relying on a single model, Dr. Gupta explained. Using a combination of models can provide more balanced and accurate results:

"Equally important is ensuring that the source datasets are obtained from authentic and credible databases."

A few technical safeguards can further minimise AI-related errors, Dr. Rydquist added. For example, always validate AI-generated citations and data summaries against primary sources, he said.

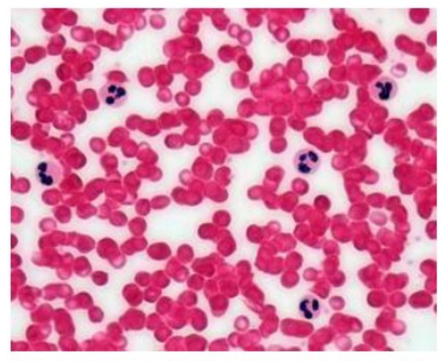
So does AI help or hinder creativity? For one, AI can only make incremental discoveries. It can't however achieve fundamental discoveries for generating truly original hypotheses as humans can.

In fact AI may be inadvertently constraining creativity and lateral thinking, according to Dr. Rydquist: "Wrestling with a problem deeply often generates insights, but AI shortcuts may deprive scientists of this generative friction."

An important distinction, however, is that while AI is great at solving well-defined problems within established frameworks, "true creativity often involves reframing the problem itself or questioning fundamental assumptions. This remains distinctly human territory," he added.

"The challenge lies not just in embracing technological progress," Dr. Gupta said, "but in preserving the human spirit that fuels true innovation."

(T.V. Padma is a science journalist based in New Delhi.tvpadma_10@yahoo.co.in)



If there is a soup of cells and you make them work together in orderly fashion, you reduce the system's entropy. BIOSCIENCE IMAGE LIBRARY

Life pays a 'heat tax' to run chemical reactions

Vasudevan Mukunth

Living things dump a lot of heat into their surroundings.

The universe is strict about conserving energy. If there is a soup of cells and you make them settle down and work together in orderly fashion, you reduce the system's entropy. In return you need to pay a 'tax' to the universe, to account for the drop in entropy. Scientists have interpreted the heat dumped by living things to be this tax.

There is a problem, however: it's two orders of magnitude higher than it needs to be to account for the entropy. What could the rest of the heat be about?

A new study by University of Freiburg, STFC Daresbury Laboratory, and University of Edinburgh researchers has argued that life produces so much heat because of how cells optimise their chemistry.

Life releases far more heat than thermodynamics alone requires; a new study suggests that this excess energy helps cells maintain a complex chemistry vital for survival

Cells have thousands of chemical reactions happening all the time. To work well, these reaction networks need to be precise and robust without trading off speed. When cells build proteins, they need to avoid making mistakes like putting the wrong amino acid in the chain. When cells build structures like their 'skeleton', they need to make parts of very particular sizes. And when they respond to stress, like sudden heat, they need to react quickly.

The researchers have proposed that cells achieve all these different goals using the same chemical setup, so to speak, i.e. they create chemical cycles that are driven far from equilibrium – like pushing a merry-go-round really hard instead of letting it just slow down once molecules have had their turns on it.

Say there's a reversible chemical reaction: A⇌B. At equilibrium, the reaction will reach a balance where A converts to B at exactly the same rate at which B converts to A, so everything will settle into stable proportions and just sit there. Then, say you force the system away from this natural balance by constantly pumping in more and more A. Now the reaction will be driven in one direction and the system will no longer be at rest. This state is said to be far from equilibrium.

In the paper, the researchers focused on a reaction called ATP hydrolysis: ATP ⇌ADP + phosphate. At equilibrium this reaction settles into certain proportions of ATP versus ADP. However, cells actively maintain the ratio at about 10 billion times what equilibrium would be, which is extremely far from equilibrium. They do this by constantly making fresh ATP, using up the ATP in cellular reactions, and preventing the reverse reaction from happening much.

When reactions are far from equilibrium, they can do useful work and can be controlled precisely. But when they are at equilibrium they are practically dead: you can't control anything because there is no net energy flow.

Maintaining this imbalance and running all the reaction cycles will necessarily generate an enormous amount of heat. It's effectively a tax cells pay to remain versatile.

The paper's calculations showed that these driven chemical cycles account for a large fraction of the heat that organisms dump. And evolution has apparently decided that this is worth it.

mukunth.v@thehindu.co.in

THE SCIENCE QUIZ

Medical disasters

Please send in your answers to science@thehindu.co.in

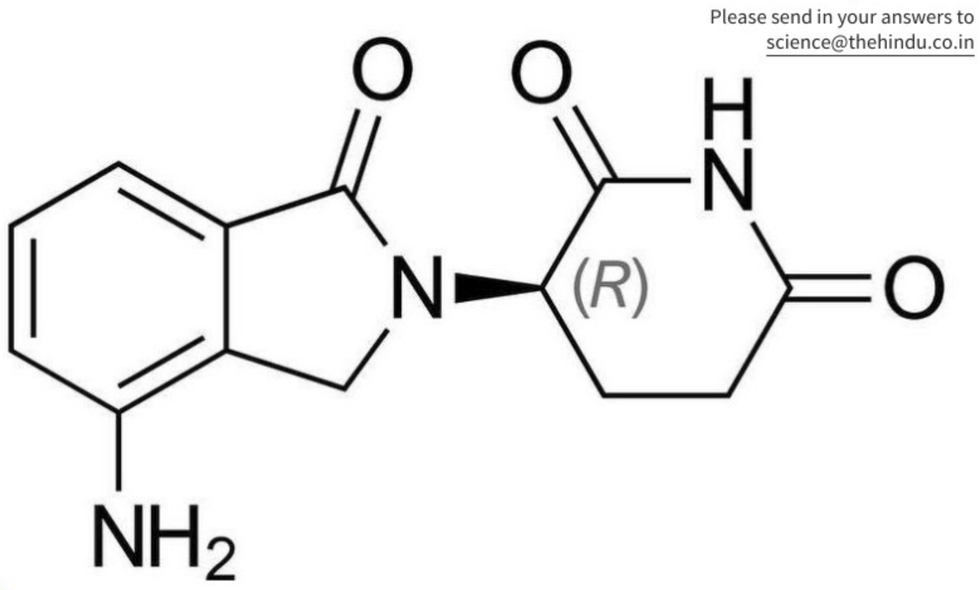
QUESTION 1
On January 27, 1928, 21 children were inoculated with a diphtheria vaccine in Bundaberg, Australia. By the next day 11 children had died. The vaccine was found to have been contaminated by bacteria. Name the investigator who revealed this cause, and later won a Nobel Prize for predicting acquired immune tolerance.

QUESTION 2
In 1987, scavengers in Brazil found an abandoned teletherapy unit and distributed a glowing blue powder inside to others to rub on their skin. As a result four people died and 249 were found to have radioactive contamination. Identify the powder.

QUESTION 3
Patients at the Sir J.J. Hospital in Bombay were treated with X to reduce intracranial pressure and other conditions in 1986. But the X was adulterated with diethylene glycol, leading to the deaths of 14 patients of acute renal failure. An inquiry exposed corruption in the drug procurement and testing system in Maharashtra. Name X.

QUESTION 4
The Dalkon Shield was an intrauterine device marketed as a safe contraceptive. But its design included a string that allowed bacteria to enter the uterus, causing severe pelvic inflammatory disease. While the fallout halted the device's sale, _____ purchased unsterilised Shields at a discount to distribute in developing countries. Fill in the blank.

QUESTION 5
_____, an antiseptic for skin conditions, was widely prescribed in Japan to treat abdominal pain and diarrhoea. However it caused paralysis and blindness. Some 11,000 to 30,000 people were affected and Japan banned the drug in 1970. Fill in the blank.



Visual: The drug shown here is created by slightly altering the chemical structure of Y. Name Y, whose use led to a tragedy in the 1950s and 1960s. PUBLIC DOMAIN

Answers to January 22 quiz:
1. Cylinder of ice drilled out of a larger mass –**Ans: Ice core**
2. Mass numbers of oxygen isotopes used to estimate ancient temperatures – **Ans: 16 and 18**
3. What palynology studies in a scientific way – **Ans: Dust**
4. Collective changes in earth's movements affecting the climate – **Ans: Milankovitch cycles**
5. Sea creatures whose shells register the ocean temperature – **Ans: Foraminifera**

Visual: Speleothems

First contact: Tamal Biswas | K.N. Viswanathan | Anmol Agrawal | Kavya M.R. | Mariya John

For feedback and suggestions
for 'Science', please write to **science@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Daily page'

Pink Line: Beautification drive begins on Bannerghatta Road

BMRCL has confirmed that the much-anticipated Pink Line corridor will be opened in phases by September 2026

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Steps are being taken to prevent the space from turning into a dumping ground again, by installing new barricades, officials say. K. MURALI KUMAR

The areas under the metro pillars, which for months had been plagued by illegal garbage dumping, are now being restored.

Waste that once accumulated daily under the viaduct has been cleared, and officials said steps were being taken to prevent the space from turning into a dumping ground again, by installing new barricades.

The clean-up drive comes as the construction on the Pink Line's elevated stations nears completion. The Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL) has confirmed that the much-anticipated Pink Line corridor will be opened in phases by September 2026.

The 7.5-km elevated section from Tavarekere to Kalena Agrahara, running along Bannerghatta Road, is expected to be commissioned by March 2026.

Saplings planted

A senior BMRCL official said that the civil works on the elevated portion have already been completed and testing activities are under way. "The prototype train for the Pink Line has recently been received and is being tested on the elevated stretch. As part of parallel works, we have begun clearing all garbage accumulated beneath the pillars and viaduct. Barricades have been installed to prevent further dumping, and saplings are being planted to improve the overall environment and aesthetics of the corridor," the official said.

The issue of garbage dumping along this stretch had drawn public attention earlier. Residents had complained that heaps of mixed waste were being dumped illegally under the pillars, turning the area into an eyesore and a serious health hazard.

The Hindu had reported the problem, 'Garbage dumped under metro pillars turns Bannerghatta Road stretch into stinking blackspot,' on October 20, 2025.

From Vega City Mall to Gurappanapalya, the under-construction Pink Line pillars had become a convenient dumping spot for residents, shopkeepers and passers-by. The problem was compounded by unauthorised posters, stickers and advertisements pasted across several pillars, further defacing the new infrastructure.

The officials said the stretch has been fully cleared. "All accumulated waste has been removed and the unauthorised posters and stickers have also been taken down. In the coming days, the pillars will be fully beautified with uniform designs and greenery, ensuring the space beneath the metro remains clean, organised and visually appealing," they added.

Welcome move

The local residents have welcomed the move. "For months, this stretch was unbearable because of the stench and mosquitoes. The clean-up has made a huge difference, and we hope the BMRCL and civic agencies ensure it does not go back to how it was," said Pavithra R., a resident of Arakere.

Another commuter Prasad V. Kumar, who uses Bannerghatta Road daily, said the change was long overdue. "The metro is a major public project, and it was painful to see the area beneath it treated like a landfill," he added.

The 21.3-km Pink Line is a key component of Phase 2 of Namma Metro's expansion, planned to connect Kalena Agrahara in the south to Nagawara in the north, creating a crucial north-south transit corridor. Of the total stretch, 13.8 km will run underground, while the remaining 7.5 km will be on an elevated viaduct.

GBA chief orders immediate work on Ejipura Flyover, mark St. John's land

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

According to officials, the construction of the 2.38-km-long Ejipura flyover on Ejipura Main Road is progressing at a rapid pace. SUDHAKARA JAIN

Greater Bengaluru Authority (GBA) Chief Commissioner M. Maheshwar Rao on Monday directed officials to immediately mark the land required at St. John's Medical College Hospital and begin work to install five portal piers for the Ejipura flyover.

The instructions were given during a meeting with traffic police and representatives of St. John's Hospital to resolve land-related issues affecting the progress of the flyover project. A small portion of a land belonging to St. John's is required on the left side of Ejipura Main Road, while moving from the Kendriya Sadan towards Ejipura, to facilitate the installation of the portal piers.

The portal piers will be constructed along the footpath adjacent to the St. John's compound wall. Following discussions, the St. John's management agreed to permit the use of the required land, a release said.

Mr. Rao instructed engineers and contractors to demarcate the area and commence work without delay. He also directed that barricades be erected to ensure public safety during construction, and that adequate space be provided for storing construction materials until the work is completed.

A small portion of a land belonging to St. John's is required on the left side of Ejipura Main Road to facilitate the installation of the portal piers

The compound wall of the institution should be reconstructed immediately after the installation of the portal piers, he said.

With regard to land required for constructing the flyover ramp in the St. John's stretch, the Chief Commissioner asked officials to expedite the Transferable Development Rights (TDR) process, take possession of the land at the earliest, and complete the work swiftly.

According to the GBA officials, the construction of the 2.38-km-long Ejipura flyover on Ejipura Main Road is progressing at a rapid pace. Of the total 762 segments required for the flyover, 645 have already been cast, while 490 segments have been erected. The remaining 117 segments are yet to be cast.

Three killed and four others injured as car crashes into truck

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The car that crashed into a lorry on National Highway 48 near Nelahaal, in the limits of the Kora police station, in Tumakuru district on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Three persons were killed and four others were injured when the car they were travelling in crashed into a truck on National Highway 48 near Nelahaal, in the limits of the Kora police station in Tumakuru district, on Monday.

The deceased have been identified as Aniketh, 42, Abhir, 44, and Sanokthi, 35. The injured were rushed to different hospitals.

Weekend trip

The police said all the victims were working in a private firm in Bengaluru and had gone on a leisure trip to Gokarna, Murudeshwar, and Udupi during the long weekend. The accident occurred when they were returning to Bengaluru. Preliminary investigation suggested that the car was overspeeding and rammed the truck from behind, said the police. The impact was severe, leaving the car completely mangled and trapping the occupants inside the vehicle. The police personnel were joined by passers-by and together they rescued the injured.

Traffic movement on the highway was disrupted for some time. The police have registered a case.

Bandepalya rowdy-sheeter Shabbir murder case: 11 accused arrested, KCOCA to be invoked

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Bandepalya police have cracked the murder case of notorious rowdy-sheeter Shabbir, who was hacked to death, and arrested 11 accused in connection with it. Considering the gravity of the offence, the police are invoking the Karnataka Control of Organised Crime Act (KCOCA) against the accused.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Electronic City Division) M. Narayan said the murder was the result of a long-standing dispute involving extortion and a civil property issue between the accused and the victim. Probe revealed that Shabbir was allegedly maintaining dominance in the area and was involved in collecting "hafta" from several traders, including scrap shop owners. He had also allegedly set his eyes on a property belonging to the sister of one of the accused named Sunny, located near a mosque in Bandepalya.

The police said Shabbir had allegedly pressured Sunny to hand over the land and had threatened to erect a compound wall forcibly at the site. He had also allegedly issued repeated threats, leading to mounting resentment among Sunny and others.

Unable to tolerate the intimidation, Sunny and his associates allegedly hatched a plan to eliminate Shabbir. The murder was meticulously planned over a week at a garage, the police said.

On the day of the incident, the accused allegedly threw chilli powder into Shabbir's eyes before hacking him to death. After committing the crime, the accused fled the scene in an autorickshaw to K.R. Puram.

They later abandoned the weapons at a separate location and escaped by train to different places, including Mumbai, Rajasthan and Hyderabad. Special police teams were formed, following which all 11 accused were tracked down and arrested from different States.

The BMTC bus that was damaged after being hit by a passing train, at a railway crossing at Sadaramangala in Kadugodi on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

BMTC bus reverses into railway track, gets hit by passing train

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A major tragedy was narrowly averted in Bengaluru after a train rammed a BMTC bus at a railway crossing at Sadaramangala in Kadugodi on Monday.

The impact caused damage to the bus, but no fatalities were reported as no passengers were travelling in the vehicle. However, the bus conductor sustained injuries.

According to officials, the incident occurred when the BMTC bus was heading from Sadaramangala towards Kadugodi on Railway Parallel Road. The bus reversed into the track and crashed into the passing train.

Due to the impact, a portion of the bus was damaged and the conductor sustained injuries.

The Kadugodi police and railway officials rushed to the spot and shifted the injured conductor to hospital. The driver has been detained for further investigation.

Timings
BENGALURU

TUESDAY, JAN. 27	
RISE 06:46	SET 18:18
RISE 12:43	SET 00:58
WEDNESDAY, JAN. 28	
RISE 06:46	SET 18:19
RISE 13:39	SET 02:01
THURSDAY, JAN. 29	
RISE 06:46	SET 18:19
RISE 14:40	SET 03:06

Bengaluru Weather	max	min
Tumakuru	30	20
Mysuru	30	14
Bengaluru	25	19

Bengaluru Today
26°C The weather will be mostly dry. Day will be comfortable. Night will be cool and hazy.

Bengaluru Tomorrow
27°C Morning will be cool with mist and haze. Day will be slight warm. Night also will be cool.

© Copyright Skymet Weather 2026
All rights reserved.

THE HINDU
DISCLAIMER: Readers are requested to verify and make appropriate enquiries to satisfy themselves about the veracity of an advertisement before responding to any published in this newspaper. THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD., the Publisher & Owner of this newspaper, does not vouch for the authenticity of any advertisement or advertiser or for any of the advertiser's products and/or services. In no event can the Owner, Publisher, Printer, Editor, Director/s, Employees of this newspaper/company be held responsible/liable in any manner whatsoever for any claims and/or damages for advertisements in this newspaper.

Plaint against fake social media accounts misusing KSIC name

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

An official of the Karnataka Silk Industries Corporation (KSIC) has filed a complaint alleging misuse of the organisation's name and logo through fake Instagram accounts, which were reportedly created to cheat customers online.

Based on the complaint filed by Doddappa Sutagatti, marketing assistant of the corporation, the Central Division cybercrime police have registered an FIR under Section 66(c) (identity theft) of the IT Act. According to the complaint, unidentified persons have, over the past six months, created multiple fake Instagram accounts in the name of 'KSIC Mysore silk' without any authorisation.

The accused misused the organisation's name and logo to attract customers and collect money through online transactions

These accounts allegedly uploaded copied images of products sold at the KSIC outlets and falsely projected them as official online sales platforms of the organisation.

The KSIC officials said that the accused misused the organisation's name and logo to attract customers and collect money through online transactions, thereby cheating the public.

The fraudulent activity not only posed a risk of financial loss to customers, but also damaged the reputation and credibility of the government-owned cooperative, they said. The officials clarified that the KSIC has not authorised any Instagram page or online platform for product sales in this manner and sought strict legal action against those involved in creating and operating the fake social media accounts.

Further investigation is under way.

GPS tracker helps recover stolen bag

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

A GPS tracker has helped a 39-year-old woman track her stolen bag.

According to the police, the incident occurred on the 13th Main Road in Sadashivanagar on January 16 around 10.30 a.m. The complainant, Asha Suparna, had parked her car on the roadside and stepped into a nearby coffee shop. She had reportedly forgotten to lock the vehicle, during which time an unidentified person opened the car door, stole a bag kept inside the vehicle and fled the spot. The stolen bag contained ₹40,000 in cash and personal belongings. A GPS tracker installed in a key holder inside the bag helped the complainant trace its movement. The woman immediately approached the Sadashivanagar Police Station. The police recovered the bag with all the belongings intact.

The accused, identified as Prakash, was taken into custody.

Published by Nirmala Lakshman at No 19&21, Bhagwan Mahaveer Road, Bengaluru-560001 and Printed by C. Sridhar at Plot No. 13-D, Bommasandra-Jigani Link Road, KIADB Industrial Area, Bommasandra, Anekal Taluk, Bengaluru-560099 on behalf of THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD., Chennai-600002. Editor: Suresh Nambath (Responsible for selection of news under the PRP Act).
ISSN 0971 - 751X

Text&Context

THE HINDU

NEWS IN NUMBERS

Maoists killed in Jharkhand police operations last year

32 The Jharkhand Police killed 32 Maoists in encounters in 2025 as part of intensified operations to curb left-wing extremism. During the same period, 326 Naxalites were arrested and 38 surrendered. The DGP said the force remains committed to making the State crime-free. PTI

Death toll in Iran protests according to rights group

5,848 A U.S.-based rights group said it has confirmed the deaths of 5,848 people in protests across Iran. The toll includes protesters, minors, security personnel and bystanders, according to the Human Rights Activists News Agency. AFP

Number of 'illegal' foreigners repatriated from Assam

467 Only 467 of the 1.7 lakh declared illegal foreigners have been repatriated to their respective countries from Assam to date. Assam has referred almost 4.35 lakh cases of suspected nationality to the Foreigners Tribunals till October 31 last year. PTI

Number of people missing in a deadly landslide in Java

80 Nineteen members of Indonesia's elite marine force are among 80 people missing in deep mud after they were swept away or buried by a weekend landslide that tore through a mountainside in West Java province, killing dozens, officials said on Monday. PTI

The real Gross State Domestic Product growth of Meghalaya

9.66 In per cent. Meghalaya has emerged as the second fastest-growing State in the country after Tamil Nadu, recording a real Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) growth of 9.66% in 2025. PTI

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

How will U.S. exit affect solar alliance?

When was the International Solar Alliance first set up? Where is it based? Will U.S. actions affect India's solar module manufacturing capacity? What about investments in solar power projects? How will it affect African nations and other poorer developing countries?

EXPLAINER

Kunal Shankar
Shikha Kumari. A

The story so far:

On January 7, the U.S. government announced that it would withdraw from 66 international organisations. The reason given was that these bodies no longer served American interests. Among them were major climate platforms, including the International Solar Alliance (ISA), an organisation headquartered in India and jointly led by India and France.

What is the ISA?

The ISA was set up in 2015 to make solar power cheaper and easier to adopt, especially in developing countries. While it doesn't build solar plants itself, it helps countries access finance, reduce risk for investors, and speed up solar adoption. Today, the Alliance has over 120 member countries and works across Africa, Asia, and island nations. The U.S. joined fairly late, in 2021. Over three years, it has contributed around $2.1 million.

How will U.S. exit affect the ISA?

The U.S. exit will not really harm the alliance financially. U.S. contribution made up only about 1% of the Alliance's total funds. Indian officials have already said that the ISA's day-to-day work will continue, and that ongoing programmes will not be shut down. Moreover, training and capacity-building efforts are still in place.

But economics is not only about budgets, it's also about confidence. And that's where the ripple effects begin.

What about India's solar industry?

As India does not depend on the U.S. for solar panels or key equipment, solar power will not become more expensive. In fact, India now makes a large share of solar components on its own. As of late 2025, India's solar module manufacturing capacity was close to 144 gigawatts. Solar cell manufacturing was around 25 gigawatts and is growing fast, with Indian companies investing across the entire supply chain.

A stress factor: President Droupadi Murmu addresses the inaugural session of the Eighth International Solar Alliance Assembly, in New Delhi on October 28, 2025. ANI

Moreover, China is by far the largest producer of high-efficiency mass market solar modules and cells, with 70% of the global cell producing capacity. In fact, India imported about $1.7 billon worth of Photovoltaic (PV) modules from China in FY25, as per a Ministry of New and Renewal Energy (MNRE) report in Parliament.

This makes it clear that the recent U.S. decision does not push up project costs in India. It does not affect electricity tariffs either. For consumers, nothing changes.

Will investments slow down?

Again, unlikely. Most solar projects in India are driven by domestic demand. They are backed by long-term contracts with state utilities and central agencies. Investors look at India's power demand, policy stability, and growth potential.

The U.S. is not the main source of funding for Indian solar projects. Indian banks, global funds, and development institutions continue to invest based on India's market fundamentals. So the pipeline of projects inside India remains intact. Even with respect to jobs, India is relatively well-protected. Solar jobs in India come mainly from manufacturing, installation, and operations within the country. Since India is rapidly building a strong local manufacturing capacity, these jobs are not affected by U.S. climate policy. There is even a possible upside. As the U.S. becomes more inward-looking and slows renewable approvals at home, it may still need clean energy equipment. With the U.S. having supply tensions with China and Mexico, Indian manufacturers could find openings, either through exports or by setting up units that meet U.S. standards. A lot however, hinges on the ongoing talks for a bilateral trade agreement between New Delhi and Washington.

Where is the real economic risk?

Mostly outside India. The ISA works extensively in Africa and poorer developing countries. These regions depend heavily on cheap loans and international cooperation to build solar projects. When a large economy like the U.S. steps back from climate engagement, lenders can turn cautious; projects can slow down; and decisions can take longer. If solar growth slows in these regions, Indian companies looking to expand abroad may feel the impact.

The ISA is also one of India's key tools for climate leadership and diplomacy in the Global South. It helps India build influence, open markets, and support Indian companies overseas. While the U.S. exit removes one influential partner and some technical expertise, it does not change who leads the alliance. India still does. That leadership now comes with more responsibility.

What next?

Solar power in India does not become costlier, domestic projects are not threatened, and jobs inside India remain secure. The real challenge then is a more divided global climate landscape, where cooperation is harder and emerging markets need to work harder to attract finance. For India's solar industry, this is not a shock. It is a stress test. And compared with where it stood a few years ago, India appears to be better prepared to handle it.

THE GIST

- The U.S. exit will not really harm the alliance financially. U.S. contribution made up only about 1% of the Alliance's total funds.
- Most solar projects in India are driven by domestic demand. They are backed by long-term contracts with state utilities and central agencies.
- The ISA works extensively in Africa and poorer developing countries. When a large economy like the U.S. steps back from climate engagement, lenders can turn cautious

How is China framing its Antarctic ambitions?

What is the proposed Antarctic Activities and Environmental Protection Law?

Lekshmi M.K.

The story so far:

On December 23, 2025, media houses reported that China was proposing a draft legislation titled the 'Antarctic Activities and Environmental Protection Law'. The draft has been submitted for first reading to the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress. The proposed legislation seeks to regulate China's activities in Antarctica.

What does the draft legislation say?

The draft legislation consists of seven chapters and 57 articles. It seeks to establish a comprehensive domestic legal framework governing all Chinese-related activities in Antarctica. It applies not only to Chinese citizens and organisations but also to foreign entities that organise Antarctic activities from within China or depart from Chinese ports. It also drafts rules aimed at regulating expeditions, scientific research, fisheries, tourism, and shipping. A central feature of the draft is its emphasis on peaceful use and environmental protection in line with the Antarctic Treaty System (a collection of international agreements which govern the southern continent). The draft prohibits military activities, and only allows its limited use if it is to support peaceful objectives. It does not permit combat operations, weapons testing, troop deployment, or strategic military activities. Mineral resource exploitation is banned except for scientific research. The draft also introduces environmental impact assessments, supervision mechanisms, and post-incident accountability. Governance challenges on Antarctic tourism, waste management, and marine pollution are also addressed.

What about China's presence in the Antarctic?

In 1984, China conducted its first scientific expedition to Antarctica. Later it became a consultative party to the Antarctic Treaty in 1985. It has since then expanded its scientific and logistical footprint in the continent over 40 years. Currently, China operates five research stations in the Antarctic, namely the Great Wall Station, the Ongshan Station, the Taishan Station, the Kunlun Station, and the Qinling Station. This well-established network of research stations in different parts of the Antarctic allows China to conduct year-long scientific research. It can conduct research across key climatic, glaciological, atmospheric, and astronomical zones. China also operates advanced polar icebreakers such as the Xuelong and Xuelong 2, strengthening its logistical capacity.

What are China's Antarctic goals?

China's official statements emphasise scientific research, climate studies, environmental protection, and international cooperation. Antarctic research supports China's understanding of the global climate challenge, seal-level rise and polar-atmospheric interactions. This has implications for domestic environmental planning as well. Its ambitions are framed around science, governance, participation, and long-term strategic presence rather than territorial claims. At the governance level, China seeks to move from being a participant to a rule-shaping actor within the Antarctic Treaty System. Moreover, sustained polar operations contribute to advancement in ice-breaking, satellite navigation and extreme-environment engineering.

What does it mean for the Antarctic treaty?

China's draft Antarctic law signals its move towards formalising and strengthening its Antarctic presence. It places Antarctic activities within a clear domestic legal and regulatory framework rather than relying only on policy guidelines. It also reflects a broader pattern among major consultative parties using national legislation to ensure better compliance with Antarctic Treaty obligations. China's legislative initiative reinforces the need to monitor how major powers organise and regulate their Antarctic engagement, as domestic laws increasingly shape behaviour within a treaty-based governance system.

Lekshmi M.K. is pursuing a postgraduate degree at Madras Christian College, Chennai and is a Research Assistant at NIAS, Bengaluru.

THE GIST

- The draft legislation seeks to establish a comprehensive domestic legal framework governing all Chinese-related activities in Antarctica.
- China's ambitions are framed around science, governance, participation, and long-term strategic presence rather than territorial claims.
- Currently, China operates five research stations in the Antarctic, namely the Great Wall Station, the Ongshan Station, the Taishan Station, the Kunlun Station, and the Qinling Station.

Govt. schemes reached 1.37 cr. families last year: Governor

Thaawarchand Gehlot says more than ₹1.13 lakh crore has been disbursed to families under the guarantee schemes

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Stating that the guarantee schemes have empowered families financially, Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot has said that 1.37 crore families in Karnataka have received direct financial benefit from one or the other scheme during 2024-25.

Delivering the 77th Republic Day address at Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw Parade Ground here, he said that while the State is spending ₹1.12 lakh crore annually to provide economic dynamism to people and strengthen the most backward sections, more than ₹1.13 lakh crore has been disbursed to families under the guarantee schemes. Quoting from the Family Survey Data, he said that 1.37 crore families had benefited from one government scheme or other during 2024-25.

"Several studies indicated that people's purchasing power has increased and families are being empowered financially, and new economic and social enthusiasm has emerged among women. Studies have shown that guarantee schemes introduced based on universal basic income have brought significant changes in the lives of women," Mr. Gehlot added.

Of the schemes for women, the Governor outlined the 12 days of menstrual leave for women annually, and 'Akka' task force', among others.

Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar during the Republic Day celebrations in Bengaluru on Monday. SUDHAKARA JAIN

Communal harmony

In line with Kuvempu's vision of Sarva Janangada Shantiya Thota, Mr. Gehlot said that Karnataka has worked hard to preserve harmony. "Special task forces have been established to further strengthen communal harmony, resulting in sustained peace in communally sensitive areas." In 2025, the government enacted 76 Acts, while 105 rules were consolidated and published, he said.

Listing the initiatives of the government that are expected to propel growth in the State, the Governor said that the Local Economy Accelerator Programme has been formulated with ₹1,000 crore with the aim of generating five lakh jobs in the next five years. A Karnataka Quantum Roadmap has been released to build a $20 billion quantum economy by 2035.

"Projects worth ₹1.5 lakh crore being undertaken in Bengaluru will accelerate development in the coming days, and ₹83,000 crore spent as capital expenditure has prioritised employment generation."

Mr. Gehlot said that over 80% of long-pending cases in revenue courts have been disposed of, 91,163 *podi*s have been completed, and 4,050 unrecorded villages have been declared as revenue villages. Approval has been granted to convert B Khata properties to A Khata, which is expected to benefit over 20 lakh people in urban local bodies, he added.

He pointed out that while agreements have been entered into to purchase 3,704 MW of electricty from private companies, State-owned companies have prepared action plans to generate an additional 4,794 MW.

In the field of education, Mr. Gehlot said that recommendations of the Dr. Sukhdeo Thorat Committee are being implemented.

Bengaluru, Mysuru, Kalaburagi, Hubballi-Dharwad, Belagavi, Mangaluru, Shivamogga and Davanagere are emerging as health hubs, he added.

Federal responsibility

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot, who last week triggered a Lok Bhavan-government confrontation over his address to the joint session of the legislature, on Monday said: "The responsibility of preserving the federal structure without weakening it lies with all of us. If we protect the Constitution, the Constitution will protect us. The Constitution is increasingly becoming relevant day-by-day.

"The most important task before the people is to elect representatives who work with an understanding of the core spirit of the Constitution, and preserve democracy through continuous questioning and dialogue. The true strength of our republic lies in unity in diversity, the dynamism of democratic institutions, and commitment to the values enshrined in our Constitution," the Governor said in his Republic Day address.

Lok Bhavan Chalo by Congress today on VB-G RAM G Act

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

In bid to seek a rollback of VB-G RAM G Act, the Congress will hold a Lok Bhavan Chalo protest on Tuesday to petition the Governor against the repeal of the MGNREGA Scheme.

The Lok Bhavan Chalo is part of the State-wide campaign by the Congress against the repeal of MGNREGA, which has now been replaced by the Centre with Viksit-Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act. "It is our Right to Work. A great strength to Constitution was given through the Act (MGNREGA) 20 years ago. Now we have decided to take out a protest march to Lok Bhavan on Tuesday," Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC president D.K. Shivakumar told presspersons here on Monday. He said that after the Lok Bhavan Chalo, protest marches would be held in every Assembly constituency, 10 to 15 days later in which all Ministers concerned will take part.

Stating that the Congress will protest till the decision on MGNREGA is not rolled back, he said: "A minimum of five km protest march will be held in all Assembly constituencies, in which Congress leaders, gram panchayat members and employment card holders will participate in big numbers."

The Lok Bhavan Chalo protest will be held at Freedom Park at 11 a.m in Bengaluru. Among those taking part in it will include Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar, AICC general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal, AICC general secretary incharge of Karnataka Randeep Surjewala and a host of Cabinet Ministers, legislators and leaders of the Congress.

Suresh Kumar questions propriety of Congress protest

BJP-JD(S) too set to protest today

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Bharatiya Janata Party MLA and former Law & Parliamentary Affairs Minister S. Suresh Kumar has questioned the propriety of the ruling Congress itself staging a protest on Tuesday and making its legislators participate in the protest instead of attending the legislature session.

Referring to the Congress' announcement that it would stage a Lok Bhavan Chalo protest on Tuesday at 11 a.m. and all its legislators and top leaders are participating in it, Mr. Suresh Kumar pointed out that the Legislative Assembly is scheduled to meet at 10 a.m. on Tuesday.

Pointing out that authorities have banned any protest that involves taking out marches on the streets of Bengaluru and involves laying a siege as per the High Court's directives, he wondered how could the ruling party itself be given permission to take up such a protest that would be violative of the norms.

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

While the Congress leaders and workers plan to take out a Lok Bhavan Chalo protest against the Centre seeking repeal of VB-G RAM-G Act, the Opposition BJP and JD(S) too are holding a protest on Tuesday against the alleged "goonda culture" shown by Congress legislators against the Governor.

Speaking to mediapersons here, Chief Whip of the Opposition in the Legislative Council N. Ravi Kumar said the protest would be held in front of Mahatma Gandhi statue on the Vidhana Soudha premises.

He demanded action against Congress legislators B. K. Hariprasad, S. Ravi and Sharath Bacche Gowda, while accusing them of indulging in unruly behaviour against the Governor.

Describing the Congress protest against VB-G RAM-G Act as a "cover-up act" to conceal the irregularities in MGNREGA, Mr. Ravi Kumar argued, "The Congress protest is meaningless and an extravagant exercise in utter futility.

The former Minister also wondered if such a permission would be granted to other parties too.

Attempts being made to weaken Constitution: CM

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has said that those who have realised that it was not an easy task to change or remove the existing Constitution are attempting to slowly weaken it.

"When Dr. B.R. Ambedkar offered the Constitution to the country, there were people opposed to it. Those who are opposed to the Constitution are opposed to social and economic justice. People should understand that these people are against poor, farmers, labourers, Dalits and oppressed sections of society," the Chief Minister said in his message on the occasion of Republic Day.

He said: "There is a plot to slowly provide poison.

Siddaramaiah

We have to be aware of these plots to weaken the Constitution and make it irrelevant by snatching away the autonomy of Constitutional institutions. If we protect the Constitution, it will protect us and the country will remain stronger. We have to take a pledge to protect the Constitution on this Republic Day,"

Justifying the guarantee schemes, he said that the schemes are being implemented as per the Article 47 of the Directive Principles of State Policy in the Constitution that makes the government's primary responsibility to provide for nutrition and improve quality of life.

"While economically weaker sections in the State are receiving about ₹60,000 to ₹70,000 annually, middle and upper middle class families are saving about ₹25,000 to ₹30,000 annually," Mr.Siddaramaiah said.

The Chief Minister said: "The Constitution has guided the government in its thoughts and programmes. The government and I are committed to the Constitution."

'Governor could have skipped parts of speech'

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

Commenting on the Governor-government confrontation over the address to the joint legislature session, Deputy Chief Minister and KPCC president D. K. Shivakumar on Monday said that the Governor could have chosen to deliver other parts of the speech and participate in the national anthem if he was not interested in reading out the parts pertaining to the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA).

"Such issues will be there in a political system. The Governor could have just read the speech and participated in the national anthem. If he was not interested to speak about MGNREGA, he could have left that, and spoken on other issues," Mr. Shivakumar told presspersons here during the Republic Day event at the KPCC office.

He said that there were lot of options before the Governor and there were precedents too in this regard. "It is his bounden duty to protect the Constitution. This is not only (happening) in Karnataka, it has happened in other States too," Mr. Shivakumar said.

KRRS embarks on co-operative natural farming

B.S. Satish Kumar
BENGALURU

To turn farming into a sustainable and profitable venture, the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangha (Collective Leadership) is set to promote co-operative natural farming along with innovative marketing.

"Under this experiment, five farmers from each village are registered with the farmers' Producers' Organisation (FPO) *Nammadu* to take up natural farming on 20 guntas (half acre) of land as an unit. Of this, 10 guntas will be dedicated to growing crops for consumption of their own family. On the remaining 10 guntas, the five farmers will have to take up joint cultivation of prescribed crops like vegetables including creepers, tubers and greens under natural farming methods to ensure chemical-free food," said KRRS leader Chukki Nanjundaswamy, who is spearheading this initiative.

The on-field training would be given on natural farming by experts.

Through santhes

The FPO will directly sell this produce to consumers through its *santhes* (shandies) that are already popular in Bengaluru and pass on the proceeds to farmers. These santhes will be managed by farmers by turns, she noted.

Each group of five farmers would be able to earn a total revenue that can range up to ₹1 lakh per crop cycle as per the estimates by the KRRS. Five-member team of farmers can earn upto ₹3 lakh a year from 10 guntas if things go well.

The aim is to demonstrate that it is possible to earn remunerative incomes even from a small patch of land by producing and directly selling chemical-free crops.

The on-field training would be given on natural farming to farmers by experts while higher level training would be provided by the Amrita Bhoomi Trust that is dedicated to training farmers.

"This idea of co-operative natural farming was being espoused by my father (the late Prof. M. D. Nanjundaswamy who founded the KRRS). We began the groundwork for this during Covid times and so far we have registered about 700 farmers as members for the FPO. We want to expand it to at least 100 villages in the immediate future," she noted.

She pointed out that already a system of direct marketing has been put in place by her organisation through its periodical *santhes* in Bengaluru where farmers are provided space and facilities to sell their organic produce directly. "Now we want to have more such *santhes*," she said.

In K.K. Hundi

The KRRS State secretariat member and Nammadu FPO Director Manju Kiran noted that the initiative has been formally rolled out in K.K. Hundi village in Chamarajanagar district recently.

"What we are trying to demonstrate now is a prototype. Our intention is to retain farm youth in agriculture and ensure that they get remunerative prices for their crops. They should be able to live dignified lives in villages," he underscored.

Rajeev Gowda arrested at Kerala border

The Hindu Bureau
BENGALURU

The Sidlaghatta police on Monday arrested Rajeev Gowda, a Congress leader and the accused in a threat case involving a civic official, at the Kerala border, ending his days-long evasion.

Rajeev Gowda, who had been on the run since January 14, was arrested by a special police team after sustained tracking.

He is accused in a case registered at the Sidlaghatta Town Police Station for allegedly abusing and threatening the Sidlaghatta municipal commissioner over the phone. The conversation went viral and led to public outrage.

According to the police, the accused had initially fled to Mangaluru after the FIR was registered and later moved towards Kerala in an attempt to evade arrest. Acting on specific intelligence, the police traced his movement and apprehended him at the Kerala border on Monday evening.

The police said the accused was being brought to Sidlaghatta under tight security.

He is likely to be produced before a court.

The case was registered following a complaint by Amrutha Gowda, who alleged that Rajeev Gowda abused her over the phone after she removed a banner bearing his photographs.

BEFORE THE HON'BLE XLII ADDL. CITY CIVIL AND SESSIONS JUDGE, AT BANGALORE [CCH43]
P and SC No. 39 of 2026

BETWEEN : 1. Sri. C. Jagadish S/o Late K. Chikkegowda, Aged about 57 years, R/at No.4, Sheshadri Road, Anand Rao Circle, Gandhinagar, Bangalore - 560009. **2. Smt. Geetha K.** W/o Late C. Prabhakar, Aged about 60 years.
3. Sri Roopesh P. S/o Late C. Prabhakar, Aged about 27 years Petitioners No. 2 and 3 are R/at No.612, Banashankari, 6th Stage, 2nd Block, Kariyanpalya, Bengaluru - 560098.
...Petitioners
AND : NIL ...Respondents
SUMMONS UNDER ORDER V RULE 20 OF THE CODE OF CIVIL PROCEDURE

Whereas Late Sri Kollur Mallappa, Son of Late Lingappa, did on the 30th day of March, Two Thousand and Three, at Bengaluru, duly execute his Last Will and Testament in respect of the Schedule Property described therein, bequeathing the same unto the Petitioners; And whereas the said Will stands duly attested by two lawful and competent attesting witnesses, the Testator having signed the same in their presence, and the said witnesses having affixed their signatures in his presence and the presence of each other, thereby complying with all statutory formalities prescribed by law; And whereas the said Testator departed this life on the 24th day of October, Two Thousand and Four, at Bengaluru, whereby the said Will duly became operative;
And whereas the Petitioners have now preferred a Petition numbered P and SC No. 39 of 2026 before the Hon'ble XLII Addl. City Civil Judge, Bangalore at Bangalore [CCH43] seeking the grant of Probate of the aforesaid Will;
Now therefore, notice is hereby given to all persons whomsoever, having or claiming to have any right, title, interest, estate or lien in, upon or against the Schedule Property, to file their objections, if any, and to appear, either in person or by duly instructed counsel, before this Hon'ble Court on the **26th /February/ Two Thousand and Twenty-Six, at Eleven O'Clock** in the Forenoon, and to produce thereon and thereby all documents, papers or records upon which they intend to rely in support of such objection or claim. Take notice further that, should no appearance be entered or objection made on the said date and at the said hour, the Petition shall be heard and determined ex parte, and orders shall be passed as this Hon'ble Court deems fit and proper in accordance with law, in the interests of justice.

SCHEDULE

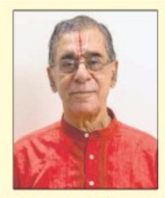
Portion of property bearing No. 4, and New No. 42, Seshadri Road, Bangalore - 560 009, measuring East to West 54.6 ft and North to South 32 ft. Bounded on the **East by :** Private Property; **West by :** Private Property;
North by : Private Property; and
South by : Portion of the same property Siddharth Kollur and Sanjeev Kumar Kollur.
Given under my hand and the seal of the Court, on this the 24th Day of January 2026.

By Order of the Court
Sd/- Senior Sheristedar
City Civil Court, Bangalore

Advocate for Petitioners
Shashank S., Advocate,
'Stambha', #7, KCD Complex,
CSI Compound, 3rd Cross,
Mission Road, Bengaluru -560027.
secretary@advocateshashank.in

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH



Shri V. RAJASUNDARAM
Attained Acharyan Thiruvadi on 25th January 2026
Deeply mourned by:
Daughter: Gayathri Suresh and family
Ph: 9841025567
Son: R. Sudarshan and family
Ph: 9840112169

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

SECOND ANNIVERSARY

In everloving memory of
Sri.V.Sivaramakrishnan
09.02.1940 - 27.01.2024
Your warm smile and calm presence will never be forgotten
Family & Friends

SIXTH ANNIVERSARY

SANTHI JYOTHI MARTIN
DOB: 15.03.1964 Vizag
DOD: 27.01.2020 Chennai
The warmth of her love surrounds us still. Her faith, her kindness, her gentle smile-ever present in our hearts
Deeply Remembered by
J S Martin & Family, Near & Dear Ones

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Black lives and the experiment called America

Dr. King's words, 'Riots are the language of the unheard', are incessantly invoked by pundits trying to illuminate why peaceful marches by day, devolve into volatile scenes of vandalism, arson, and looting by night

Ronnie A. Dunn

U.S. President Donald Trump has been employing the forces of the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agency, at a much larger scale, to conduct raids and searches in order to find, arrest and deport undocumented or "illegal aliens". In the days since, several news reports have reported on the excesses of ICE agents against undocumented migrants and sometimes even U.S. citizens. Things came to a head when ICE agents shot and killed Renée Good, a 37-year-old American citizen, on January 7 in Minneapolis. This has led to huge protests in Minneapolis against ICE. On January 24, another U.S. citizen, ICU nurse Alex Pretti, was shot and killed by ICE agents. In this article dated June 13, 2020, Ronnie A. Dunn analyses protests surrounding the death of George Floyd. Here the author analyses how white populations, due to video evidence and eye-witness accounts, were actually able to see how Black people as well as other minority groups are treated in the country. A parallel can be drawn between the protests when one sees how white majority populations have responded to the incident.

In response to the protests and racial unrest that have spread across the United States and around the world in the wake of the May 25 video-recorded murder of George Floyd , a 46-year-old African-American father of five, by white Minneapolis police officer, Derek Chauvin, who kneeled on Floyd's neck for 8 minutes and 46 seconds until he stopped breathing, the words of Dr. Martin Luther King have been cited frequently, as they often are in times of racial tension in America.

Growing violence: Mourners gather at a makeshift memorial in the area where Alex Pretti was shot dead by federal immigration agents in Minneapolis, Minnesota, on January 25. AFP

Words that resonate

"Riots are the language of the unheard," are Dr. King's words that are incessantly invoked by pundits trying to illuminate why peaceful marches and protests by day, devolve into volatile scenes of vandalism, arson, and looting by night. There is another quote from Dr. King given in a speech to the American Psychological Association, at its annual meeting in Washington DC in 1967, seven months prior to his assassination, that is equally, if not more relevant for this current moment. In that speech Dr. King stated, "White America needs to understand that it is poisoned to its soul by racism and the understanding needs to be carefully documented and consequently more difficult to reject." And in a challenge to his audience he added, "...Negroes want the social scientist to address the white community and 'tell it like it is'. White America has an appalling lack of knowledge concerning the reality of Negro life."

With America just re-emerging from a nationwide three-month, COVID-19 imposed house arrest, with no sports and little on television to serve as a distraction, the nation was held, both captive audience and unwitting witnesses, to arguably the most egregious, depraved, and inhuman police use-of-deadly-force ever visually recorded in American policing history.

Additions to a brutal history

This video, carefully documented by 17-year-old Darnella Frazier using her cellphone, of Floyd's murder exposed white America to the reality of, in essence, the state-sanctioned racial violence that blacks and people of colour in the United States have decried since its founding. Floyd's death is the third unarmed black citizen who has died at the hands of white police in a four-month period.

There was the case of 25-year-old Ahmaud Arbery, an African-American, who was chased and shot by a former law enforcement officer and his son and another white male, as Arbery jogged near his New Brunswick, Georgia neighbourhood. The other case was of Breonna Taylor, a 26-year-old African-American emergency medical technician living in St. Louis, Missouri, shot eight times while lying in her bed by undercover narcotics detectives. They were attempting to execute a "no-knock search warrant" on a suspect who was already in police custody, and entered the wrong residence. These recent killings are but the latest in America's long brutal history of the taking and brutalisation of black bodies, from slavery, through Jim Crow, the Civil Rights/Black Power Movements, to the War on Drugs and the present era of mass incarceration.

The 349-year period, from 1619 when the first Africans were brought to American shores, to 1968, the year blacks in principle gained their full citizenship rights with passage of the Fair Housing Act which culminated in the enactment of the modern Civil Rights legislation (i.e., 1964 Civil Rights Act and 1965 Voting Rights Act). This represents 87% of Blacks' 401-year experience (from 1619 to 2020) in what is now the United States, which was defined by crushing racial oppression. Thus, it has only been in the last 56 years, within this writer's lifetime, that African-Americans have ostensibly been afforded the rights and freedoms that accrue from American citizenship. Yet, the brutal murder of blacks in America continues, unabated.

Then and now

However, this moment feels conspicuously different than those that followed in the wake of the deaths of other unarmed blacks killed by white police or self-appointed vigilantes invoking spurious claims of self-defence under the increasingly permissive provisions of "Stand-Your-Ground-Laws", now found in a majority of American States. It feels different because unlike all of the protests and riots that have ensued after the deaths of other unarmed blacks in the past, even those of the late 1960s, where all of the protesters were primarily black, this time was different. The protesters, including peaceful demonstrators, agitators, and looters, who took to the streets of Minneapolis, a city that is 64% white and 19% black, in the aftermath of George Floyd's death were a multiracial amalgam of people from all backgrounds.

The demonstrators this time reflect a diversity that more closely mirrors that of America. And as the protests and demonstrations spread to cities and towns, big and small across America, the images that emerged were the same. White protesters carrying "Black Lives Matter" signs in white middle class suburbs and small rural towns, as demonstrations continue across the country and now around the world, clearly indicate this time is different.

Striking a chord, globally

And yet, the demands while at their core, are the same that they have been for generations of black folks, they too are different. At their core, the demands are for society to value a black life as much as that of a white life, or any other, in every regard. Thus, the simplicity and elegance of the phrase, "Black Lives Matter," which captures the true essence of the now 401-year, blood-stained, struggle for freedom and racial equality and justice in America. But these protests also differ in that, they have not only transcended racial lines but they also have traversed borders and oceans as protests have spread to Canada, the United Kingdom, South Africa, New Zealand, China, the Philippines and many others, in solidarity with the 'Black Lives Matter' Movement, demanding an end to police brutality and systemic racism both in America and abroad.

Why have white Americans reacted differently to this video of a defenceless black person brutalised and killed by the police, unlike those of 12-year-old Tamir Rice (2014), Eric Garner (2014), or Philando Castile (2016) and countless others before? Perhaps, as with the social scientists Dr. King challenged in his speech, who would employ the scientific method in their research, this video provided a sufficient sample size of evidence to convince a sceptical white mainstream that the hypothesis that the black subjects in this experiment in democracy called America, are in fact the victims of treatment by the police and the criminal justice system that is the polar opposite of their experiences with law enforcement and the criminal justice apparatus in this country.

On injustices

Just as COVID-19 has exposed the glaring racial inequities that make blacks disproportionately vulnerable to the deadly disease, so has George Floyd's murder exposed to the world the centuries-old, state-sanctioned and extra-legal, racial violence and injustices that blacks have been subjected to in America. Yet, the deadly encounters that African-Americans have with the police – the most ubiquitous agent of the state and that in which the average citizen is most likely to have direct contact in their daily lives, at least for people of colour – is only the tip of the proverbial iceberg.

These interactions between blacks and the police are emblematic of the deep, structural, racial inequalities that permeate every aspect of American society. And while it affects black, brown, indigenous, and Asian people of various intersectional social identities, in America it is most evident in the marginalised status of the black male.

I submit that it is the historical, economic deprivation, incarceration, and social stigmatisation of the black male as the symbolic assailant in the American psyche that prevented a vast segment of white America from acknowledging the stark reality of black life in America. And now that not only white America but also the world has awoken to this reality, it is incumbent upon society to reject the null hypothesis that the cataclysmic criminal justice and socioeconomic outcomes affecting blacks, and by extent people of colour, is the result of their own personal failings. For if we do not, as is possible with any experiment, the one called America will ultimately fail.

Ronnie A. Dunn is Chief Diversity Officer and Associate Professor of Urban Studies, Cleveland State University, Ohio

FROM THE ARCHIVES

Know your English

S. Upendran

"Is it O.K. to say, "I ain't coming tomorrow"? (P. Vijay, Hospet).
The word "ain't" which rhymes with "faint", "paint" and "taint" is frequently used in some dialects of British and American English. African-Americans, for example, use it quite often in their speech. It is the short form of "am not", "is not", "are not", etc. Here are a few examples: I ain't coming home. (I am not coming home) He ain't good looking. (He is not good looking). As to the question whether one can say "I ain't coming tomorrow", it depends on the context. You can probably get away with it in informal contexts, but not in formal ones. Many native speakers frown on those who do use this word. Do not use "ain't" in your writing. As some people put it, "Ain't ain't a word, cos it ain't in the dictionary!"

What is the meaning and origin of "to beat about the bush"? (G. V. Vamsi, Korukanda, Andhra Pradesh).
This expression owes its origin to the cruel sport of batfowling. In this sport, people went into the forest at night and killed birds. The killing was done in a very cruel manner. The "batfowlers" – that is what these bird killers were called – woke up the sleeping birds and stunned them by shining bright light into their eyes. They then proceeded to kill the birds with bats and clubs. The people who indulged in this sport were called "batfowlers" because they used bats to kill fowls (i.e., birds). If the bushes in which the birds were sleeping were thick, it was the job of the servant boys who accompanied the "batfowlers" to awaken the sleeping birds. They did this by beating the bushes that were adjacent to the thick one. The sleepy birds, dazed and confused, flew straight to the bright lights where they were beaten to death. The servant boys were not interested in the bushes they were beating; they were interested in the birds that were sleeping in the adjacent bush. So when a person beats about the bush, he/she conceals the real thing that interests him/her. He/ she doesn't come straight to the point; he/she approaches the subject cautiously in a roundabout way. A person who beats about the bush avoids answering questions directly. Here are a few examples: I wish you would stop beating about the bush and tell me what happened. Stop beating about the bush. Tell me how much money you need.

What is the difference in meaning between "fare" and "price"? (J. Suresh, Kurumandapam, Tiruchy).
A fare is usually the amount of money that a passenger pays to be conveyed a certain distance by train/bus/plane/taxi, etc. When you pay a "fare", a journey is usually involved; it may be short or long. Train fares keep going up every year and nobody protests. The fare came to Rs. 50. My cousin spends Rs. 2,000 a month on taxi fares alone. The "price" of something is the amount of money that you must pay in order to buy it. It may be a shirt, a bicycle, a television set, a ticket, etc. The price of the car was Rs. 3,00,000. The price of the plane ticket to Mumbai is Rs. 5,000; that is, the air fare from Hyderabad to Mumbai is Rs. 5,000.

Published in The Hindu on June 1, 1999.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

The new Syrian government's attack on Kurdish forces has dealt a heavy blow to their territorial rights and aspirations for a future homeland. A quiz on the Kurds

Mohammed Hidhayat

QUESTION 1
Name the four countries were the ethnic group is primarily found.

QUESTION 2
Which religious minority among the Kurds was targeted by the Islamic State?

QUESTION 3
Which post-World War I treaty promised Kurdish autonomy but was never ratified?

QUESTION 4
Abdullah Ocalan abandoned principles of Marxist-Leninism in prison and replaced it with this alternative model. Name it.

QUESTION 5
Which large-scale chemical attack did the Baathist regime carry out against the Iraqi Kurds in the 1980s?

QUESTION 6
Which Kurdish militant group was suspected of assassinating the Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme?

QUESTION 7
In which year was a decree granting the Kurds national language status for Kurdish; holiday for Nowruz; and restoration of citizenship issued?

QUESTION 8
Which all-female Kurdish militia gained global attention during the fight against IS?

Visual question:
Which medieval Kurdish commander became a central figure in Islamic resistance to the Crusades (Hint: The character was famously featured in this film *Kingdom of Heaven*). YOUTUBE

Questions and Answers to the previous day's daily quiz: 1. The last time there was more than one guest at the Republic Day parade. **Ans: 2018 when 10 Heads of ASEAN States were invited**
2. In 1956, this guest became the first non-Asian to be invited. **Ans: Rab Butler, U.K.'s Chancellor of the Exchequer**
3. Sir Malik Ghulam Muhammad and Rana Abdul Hamid have been guests from Pakistan in these years. **Ans: 1955 and 1965**
4. These 3 members of the same family from this country that have had the honour of being guests at the Republic Day parade. **Ans: Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, Jigme Singye Wangchuck and Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck, the three kings of Bhutan**
5. The only U.S. President to have been given the honour. **Ans: Barack Obama in 2015**
6. In 1961, this guest became the first woman to be invited as the Chief Guest. **Ans: Queen Elizabeth**
Visual: Name this European leader who has been invited twice as the chief guest. **Ans: Jacques Chirac of France (1976 and 1998)**
Early Birds: Tamal Biswas| Ambarin Aslam| Parimal Das| Sunil Madhavan| Dodo Jayaditya

Word of the day

Schmooze:
an informal conversation; talk idly or casually and in a friendly way

Synonyms: chat, confabulation

Usage: *We had a wonderful schmooze about the old days.*

Pronunciation:
newsth.live/schmoozepro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /ʃmu:z/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

Tharoor declines to comment on CPI(M) talks

Press Trust of India
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Congress MP Shashi Tharoor has said that he had seen reports claiming that he had held discussions with persons associated with the Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)] in Dubai, but declined to comment on the issue.

Mr. Tharoor, who is currently attending a literature festival in Dubai, was approached by presspersons seeking his response to the reports on Sunday. He said that it would not be appropriate to comment on such matters while being in a foreign country.

Speculation about the Thiruvananthapuram MP switching to another political party surfaced following claims that he was upset over Congress leader Rahul Gandhi not adequately acknowledging him at a recent event in Kochi and over alleged repeated attempts by party leaders in the State to sideline him.

CPI(M) refutes claim

CPI(M) State secretary M. V. Govindan dismissed questions on Mr. Tharoor joining the party. "Tharoor continues to be a prominent leader of the Congress. He follows a different approach of praising the BJP Prime Minister. In such a situation, I don't think rumours of him joining the CPI(M) are relevant," he said.

Leader of Opposition, V. D. Satheesan, said he was unaware that Mr. Tharoor had caused any problem for the Congress.

Rescuers save lives of nine stranded in Hyderabad lake

A team of soil-testing experts and labourers were conducting surveys for construction of a bridge when the boat malfunctioned; they were rescued in a midnight operation by HYDRAA personnel

The Hindu Bureau
HYDERABAD

In a dramatic midnight operation, nine workers and engineers working on the bridge across the Mir Alam tank were rescued by the Hyderabad Disaster Management and Asset Protection Agency (HYDRAA) after their boat malfunctioned in the middle of the lake early on Monday.

The workers could not restart the engine on Sunday evening while trying to return to the shore at the end of the day. As darkness fell, a mechanical failure coupled with a dense carpet of water hyacinth left them immobilised.

Stranded in the middle of the lake with frequent sightings of crocodiles in the Babanagar and Bahadurpura areas, the panicked workers dialled '100'. The group, which included soil-testing experts and labourers, was conducting preliminary work for the bridge project when their boat's engine failed, according to HYDRAA.

HYDRAA workers rescuing the team who were stranded on a boat in the middle of Mir Alam lake on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"HYDRAA SFO Jameel and Team In-charge Swami maintained constant phone contact to prevent panic. Using cell phone signals and flashlights to navigate the thick vegetation that made movement in the water difficult, the DRF team executed the rescue in two trips, safely evacuating all nine individuals," according to a media release.

The team was conducting surveys for the construction of the ₹319.24 crore bridge connecting Shastripuram to Chintalmet in the southern part of Hyderabad. The bridge, contracted to KNR Constructions, aims to alleviate traffic near the Zoo Park and Aramghar within a span of 24 months.

NSS Board decides against alliance with SNDP citing 'political situation'

The Hindu Bureau
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The attempts to forge unity between the Nair Service Society (NSS) and the Sree Narayana Dharma Paripalana (SNDP) Yogam have failed once again. On Monday, the NSS director Board decided to abandon the efforts, citing the prevailing political situation.

Recent statements by NSS general secretary G. Sukumaran Nair and SNDP general secretary Vellapally Natesan had created the impression of a thaw in relations between the two powerful Hindu community organisations over the past few weeks. This sparked speculation about its potential impact on the upcoming Assembly elections in Kerala.

However, on Monday, Mr. Nair issued a statement declaring the proposed unity impractical in the current political scenario, "especially because the NSS follows a policy of equidistance from all political formations". The statement added that the NSS wished to maintain the same friendly relationship with the SNDP as it does with other community organisations.

"The meeting has therefore decided not to press ahead with the proposal for unity with the SNDP," it concluded.

Past attempts at rapprochement between the NSS (a forward caste Hindu organisation) and the SNDP (representing the dominant Hindu Ezhava OBC community) have collapsed due to sharp differences over reservations.

Two dead as boat capsizes in Udupi dist.

The Hindu Bureau
MANGALURU

Two people died and two others are in critical condition after a boat carrying 14 people hailing from Mysuru capsized at an estuary near the Hangarkatte Ship Building area, in Udupi district, in Karnataka, on Monday.

The Udupi Police gave the names of the deceased as Shankarappa, 27, and Sindhu, 23, while Dharmaraja, 26, and Deesha, 26, are in critical condition, the police said.

According to preliminary information gathered by the police, 14 persons from Saraswatipuram, who work at a call centre in Mysuru, were visiting Udupi on Sunday.

On Monday, they boarded the boat at Malpe Delta Beach point. The boat belonged to the Waveriders company, which operates boats for tourists.

While life jackets were given to all 14 tourists, only a few wore them. Around noon, as the boat was moving towards Kodi Kanyana, it capsized near the Hangarkatte Ship Building area, the place where the river Swarna meets the sea.

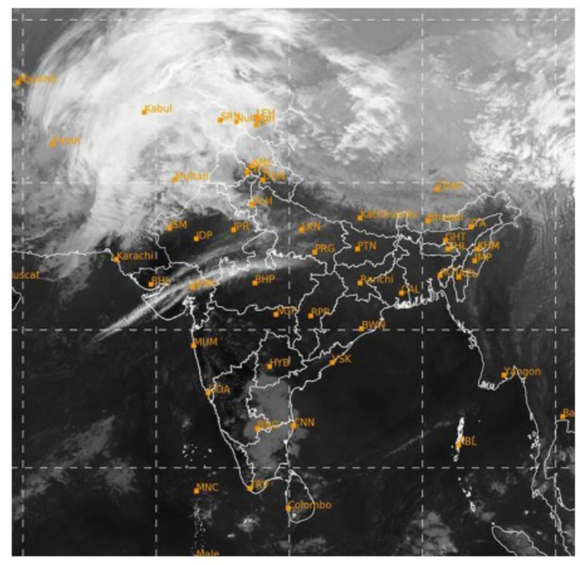
All 14 people were shifted to other boats and brought to shore. Two people died, and of the survivors, two are in critical condition, the police said.

A case has been registered against the owner and captain of the boat.

An investigation is under way to find out whether the boat had the necessary permits to operate as a tourist boat.

WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

Forecast for Tuesday: Heavy rainfall/snowfall likely in Himachal Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit, Baltistan, Muzaffarabad and Uttarakhand. Thunderstorm with lightning likely in Madhya Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Marathwada. Cold wave conditions likely in Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi and Punjab.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	27.9	12.0	Kozhikode	--	35.2	25.0
Ahmedabad	—	25.3	16.1	Kurnool	--	31.5	20.0
Aizawl	—	28.7	9.3	Lucknow	--	22.9	9.5
Allahabad	—	22.8	11.8	Madurai	--	31.2	22.6
Bengaluru	—	24.6	18.5	Mangaluru	--	33.8	22.7
Bhopal	—	21.0	11.2	Mumbai	--	30.2	21.0
Bhubaneswar	—	32.0	14.5	Mysuru	--	29.8	14.8
Chandigarh	—	19.7	6.2	New Delhi	--	20.6	3.6
Chennai	35.0	27.7	22.2	Patna	--	24.0	14.5
Coimbatore	5.0	29.4	20.4	Port Blair	--	31.0	25.3
Dehradun	—	23.2	7.6	Puducherry	031.5	23.4	21.2
Gangtok	—	15.5	6.7	Pune	--	30.7	13.2
Goa	—	25.4	13.8	Raipur	--	31.0	15.3
Guwahati	—	27.4	13.0	Ranchi	--	25.6	8.0
Hubballi	—	31.6	20.0	Shillong	--	17.0	6.2
Hyderabad	—	29.2	19.6	Shimla	--	12.6	5.0
Imphal	—	24.6	8.4	Srinagar	000.2	4.6	-0.1
Jaipur	—	21.0	6.7	Thiruvananthapuram	--	32.9	24.1
Kochi	—	31.6	25.4	Tiruchi	002.0	29.3	22.0
Kohima	—	17.6	7.4	Vijayawada	--	32.2	23.0
Kolkata	—	27.7	15.4	Visakhapatnam	--	30.9	20.4

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO₂	NO₂	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	102	77	35	151	171	
Bengaluru	3	79	4	20	64	
Chennai	6	1	54	39	42	
Delhi	48	125	44	321	204	
Hyderabad	4	13	63	81	104	
Kolkata	14	50	43	234	165	
Lucknow	10	32	53	156	156	
Mumbai	13	53	42	90	115	
Pune	—	69	23	257	207	
Visakhapatnam	10	67	17	168	185	

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Singrauli, Madhya Pradesh recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 352 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Madikeri, Karnataka recorded a healthy AQI score of 20

Air Quality Code: Poor, Moderate, Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

INBRIEF

Naidu stresses use of AI to ease work, enhance efficiency

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Monday stressed the need for extensive use of technology in governance to ease the workload of field-level employees and enhance efficiency in public service delivery. Chairing a review meeting of the Real-Time Governance Society, directed officials to provide proper training wherever performance gaps exist and to ensure continuous monitoring. Declaring 2026 as the Technology-Driven Decision Making Year, he said the role of AI must be expanded across government services.

Kerala Minister hospitalised following Republic Day event

Kerala Minister for Ports Ramachandran Kadannapally was hospitalised after he felt unwell during the Republic Day celebration held at the Kannur Collectorate ground on Monday morning. Mr. Ramachandran experienced fatigue shortly after delivering the Republic Day address around 9.30 a.m. He was immediately shifted to a private hospital in Kannur in an ambulance by police and health department officials. Doctors later said that the Minister's health condition was satisfactory and that there was no cause for concern.

IRISET eyes ISRO tie-up for 'Kavach' upgrade

The Indian Railways Institute of Signal Engineering and Telecommunications (IRISET) is in the process of signing a pact with the ISRO to further technological exploration in 'Kavach', the indigenously developed Automatic Train Protection system. The institute is also strengthening collaboration with national institutions such as C-DAC (Noida) to conduct training programmes on emerging technologies, including AI, Data Science, Big Data Analytics, Cloud Computing and Blockchain.

Tiger that strayed into A.P. remains elusive

G.V.R. Subba Rao
ELURU

The sub-adult tiger, which strayed into Andhra Pradesh from Telangana, has repeatedly outsmarted the capture efforts, avoiding multiple baited cages set up to trap it. Speaking to *The Hindu*, Divisional Forest Officer (DFO), Eluru, P. Venkat Sandeep Reddy said drone surveillance suggests that the tiger is now moving along a canal, around 1.5 kilometres from a bridge leading into the Kovvada Reserve Forest. The tiger is being monitored using drone surveillance and pugmark tracking, he says.

The DFO said that the tiger is avoiding the cages set up along its path. The animal is stopping near the cage, looking at the bait, usually a goat, and moving away. Despite the traps being camouflaged with forest leaves, the tiger is avoiding entering the cage. There is no threat to human life, even as efforts continue to track the movement of animal, he said. Forest officials say that the tiger is believed to have travelled nearly 20 kilometres, moving from Telangana through Bedadanuru to Dippakayalapadu, covering about 10 km per night.

The forest authorities have urged the public to avoid venturing out at night and cooperate with the officials until the tiger safely enters the reserve forest.

Parents among five held for selling newborn girl for ₹50,000

The Hindu Bureau
MYSURU

The Chamarajanagar district police have arrested five persons, including the parents of a girl, for allegedly selling the newborn to a couple in Arakalgud taluk of Hassan district in Karnataka for ₹50,000.

The baby girl was born at the Chamarajanagar district hospital on July 26, 2025 to Sindhu and Manjunayak, a couple from Ramasamudra in Chamarajanagar town.

When the Child Development Project Officer of Chamarajanagar noticed that the newborn girl was not in her parents' custody, a complaint was lodged with the Chamarajanagar Town Police Station on September 15, 2025.

A case was registered by the police and an investigation into the matter began.

Absconding

The baby's parents, who had been absconding for about six months, were traced using technical and scientific investigation methods, said a police statement.

When they were taken into custody and interrogated on January 23, 2026, Manjunayak and Sindhu reportedly revealed that they had sold the baby for ₹50,000 through a Group D employee at Cheluvamba Hospital in Mysuru to a couple, identified as Javaraiah and Netra, residents of Konnanuru village in Arakalgud taluk of Hassan district. The six-month-old baby was found in the care of Javaraiah and Netra by the police.

The baby was rescued and handed over to the Child Development Department. "The child is healthy and doing well," said a statement issued by the Chamarajanagar district police.

The intermediary from Cheluvamba Hospital in Mysuru, Shantha, the baby's parents Manjunayak and Sindhu and the purchasers Javaraiah and Netra have all been arrested, as per the police.

They were produced before the court and remanded in judicial custody.

Thieves shoot at youth for filming heist

The Hindu Bureau
BELAGAVI

A young man was injured when he was shot at by two unidentified miscreants, at Halasangi village in Vijayapura district on Monday. The miscreants reportedly robbed a jewellery shop at gun-point and escaped with 205 gm of gold. They threatened Maharudra Kanchangar and his father Sadashiv Kanchangar. When Basanna Galgali, a boy in a nearby shop, began recording the heist on his phone, the thieves shot at him. He suffered an injury on his leg and was rushed to a hospital. He is receiving treatment and is stable. Police officers visited the scene and are investigating.

NDA government restored stability in A.P.: Governor

The Hindu Bureau
VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Governor S. Abdul Nazeer on Monday said the State remained without clear direction for several years, the capital project stalled, and its economic confidence shaken.

The absence of continuity eroded investors' trust and weakened financial stability. Despite the challenges, the incumbent government has worked with determination and restored stability, he said.

Participating as the chief guest in the Republic Day celebrations near the State Secretariat, Mr. Nazeer said Amaravati was being developed with renewed vigour, having secured financial closures for key projects including the N5 and E3 roads and the Governor's Residence Complex.

A.P. Governor S. Abdul Nazeer, with DGP Harish Kumar Gupta at the 77th Republic Day celebrations in Amaravati on Monday. G.N. RAO

About 92% of the land pooling exercise has been completed. With the Negotiated Settlement Policy, the trust of farmers stood reaffirmed.

The Governor said family cards under the Family Benefit Management System with a dynamic 'family score' would be issued from June, increasing welfare coverage from 90.74% to 98.15%.

'Telangana government has earned the trust of people'

R. Ravikanth Reddy
HYDERABAD

Governor Jishnu Dev Varma said Telangana has set a target of becoming a three trillion-dollar economy by 2047, contributing significantly to India's aspiration of a 30 trillion-dollar economy, and the vision document unveiled at the Telangana Rising Global Summit-2025 was in line with the Viksit Bharat idea of the Central government.

Addressing the gathering on Republic Day, the Governor said the Revanth Reddy government has earned the trust of the people by achieving notable milestones.

The "Telangana Rising - Vision 2047" document, which provides a comprehensive roadmap for inclusive and sustainable development, was in alignment with the national goal of Viksit Bharat 2047, he said. Several women-centric schemes such as the Indira Mahila Shakti Mission, free bus travel, subsidised gas cylinders, SHG-run enterprises, housing scheme, rice distribution to the poor, healthcare investments, and social justice measures like caste surveys and SC sub-caste categorisation showcased government's commitment, he said.

Telangana Governor Jishni Dev Varma at the Republic Day parade in Hyderabad on Monday. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

March of the Republic

While celebrating achievements, the government must not ignore challenges

President Droupadi Murmu reflected on India's democratic and development journey on the eve of India's 77th Republic Day. Her emphasis was rightly on the self-reliance of the country in all fields and India's role as a messenger of peace and stability in a world that is increasingly fractious. Ms. Murmu highlighted recent national achievements and touched upon political and cultural themes that are currently the priorities of the Centre. She noted that the national song, Vande Mataram, was a "lyrical national prayer" even as the country celebrates the 150th anniversary of its composition, and also paid tribute to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, whose 150th birth anniversary was celebrated recently, for his role in unifying the nation. The commander-in-chief also hailed the success of Operation Sindoor, which involved precision strikes against terror infrastructure, and credited it to India's growing self-reliance in defence. The President said India's progress towards becoming the third largest global economy was well on track, and commended economic reforms such as the GST and the new Labour Codes. She noted the great strides achieved by the country's women in fields ranging from agriculture to space, and their critical role as voters. Farmers, sanitation workers, teachers, scientists, and healthcare professionals also found special mention in the President's speech.

The President invoked the idea of constitutional nationalism. Republic Day celebrations are an annual occasion to revisit the ideals of the Constitution and to review its progress in principle and practice. Cataloguing the achievements of the country is motivating, but also essential on such occasions is self-reflection. Economic growth or military prowess are not the sole markers of progress for any nation. Singing paeans to the Constitution is one thing, but delivering on its principles by protecting the rights of citizens and discharging the duties of the state is quite another. The state in its self-congratulatory posture, as reflected in the President's speech, must not ignore the many struggles of the citizenry that persist even in the eighth decade of the Republic. Civilisational pride cannot be a ruse to overshadow the material questions of the present. Republic Day celebrates the ideals of the Constitution. Sectarian politics, the weakening of the federal character of the Republic, and corruption should not be allowed to undermine those ideals.

Mind the time

India needs public-funded geriatric care to take care of its elderly

While India is often celebrated for its demographic dividend, its States are undergoing a significant but uneven demographic transition. According to a new RBI report, Kerala and Tamil Nadu will be "ageing States" by 2036 because their elderly populations will exceed 22% and 20%, respectively. On the other hand, the working age populations of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, and Jharkhand will continue to rise beyond 2031. Karnataka and Maharashtra occupy the middle ground, balancing growth with the onset of ageing pressure. In response, the RBI has advised ageing States to "rationalise" their subsidies to afford rising pension costs and youthful States to "invest heavily in human capital". But how mindful is the RBI's fiscal advice of the political undertones? Southern States, having successfully tamed population growth, face a double whammy: lower Central tax devolution because population weightage in Finance Commission formulae favours the populous northern States plus lower parliamentary representation due to the upcoming delimitation exercise. On the other hand, while the youthful States have a "window of opportunity" to boost growth using a larger workforce, the share of their spending on education has stagnated or declined, and the question of employability persists. These people will also enter the workforce at a time of manufacturing automation and AI in industry, so the RBI's suggestion to "boost labour-intensive sectors" may leave these States vulnerable to the possibility of ageing before they get rich.

Research has shown that ageing in India disproportionately affects women, who often live longer but with fewer financial assets. The RBI's focus on "workforce policy" overlooks the majority of elderly women who were never in the formal workforce and thus have no pension. The RBI model also assumes some level of family support, but with migration and nuclear families becoming the norm, the informal safety net is collapsing. Ultimately, the demographic transition cannot be managed by fiscal changes alone. First, a new industrial policy is needed to create jobs en masse in new sectors such as green energy and the care economy. Second, the youthful States must build healthcare and pension services now to avoid fiscal shocks if and when the replacement fertility rate drops. Third, for most of India's elderly, the future looks less like "graceful ageing" and more like financial dependency, unless the state drastically expands social pensions; but this directly contradicts the RBI's call for fiscal consolidation. Finally, without a massive expansion of public geriatric care, the "graceful ageing" that the report envisions will be available only to the wealthy.

Playing hide and seek on employment guarantee

Jean Drèze

Visiting Professor at the Department of Economics, Ranchi University

The oddly named Viksit Bharat – Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act (VB – G RAM G Act) has attracted a torrent of criticisms in recent weeks. A few commentators have defended it. Most of them are associated with the Central government. Still, their arguments are worth considering.

Union Minister for Rural Development Shivraj Singh Chouhan took the lead with two articles in national dailies. He did a great service to the public by presenting the case for the VB – G RAM G Act on behalf of the Central government. Alas, the case is not impressive. Mr. Chouhan claimed that the VB – G RAM G Act provides the same work guarantee as the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), 2005, with an enhanced entitlement of 125 days per household per year instead of 100 days. However, as others have already pointed out, this claim overlooks the "switch-off" provision embedded in Section 5(1) of the Act, which states that the employment guarantee applies "in such rural area in the State as may be notified by the Central government". This discretion defeats the purpose of an employment guarantee. It is like providing a work guarantee without a guarantee that the guarantee applies.

Conditional on the guarantee being in place, the VB-G RAM G Act does extend it for 125 days. But this could have been done under MGNREGA, without even requiring an amendment of the Act. It is no justification whatsoever for the VB-G RAM G Act. Indeed, a few States are already guaranteeing 125 days under MGNREGA.

The disentitlement saga

Amplifying the claim that the VB-G RAM G Act is an expansion rather than a restriction of MGNREGA, Mr. Chouhan played up the removal, in the VB-G RAM G Act, of earlier "disentitlement provisions". In the absence of any explanation, most readers must have wondered what this is about. Since the same point was made by other champions of VB-G RAM G, it is worth clarifying.

When MGNREGA was drafted, a mild concern arose about the possibility of frivolous work applications – that is, applications from people who have no intention to work. Some of them, for instance, might do this in the hope of getting the unemployment allowance instead of a work offer. By way of protection against frivolous applications, a provision was inserted to the effect that if someone turns down a work offer after applying, then they will lose eligibility to the unemployment allowance for a period of three months. This is a weak protection against frivolous work applications, but it does not do any harm. For some reason, this clause was called "Disentitlement to receive unemployment allowance in certain circumstances".

There is little substance in recent arguments for the replacement of MGNREGA with the the VB-G RAM G Act.

As it turns out, frivolous work applications are an imaginary problem. This problem has never arisen in a serious way in the last 20 years. The disentitlement clause has never been used, and indeed it is quite useless (unlike the separate provision stating that no unemployment allowance is due to someone who turns down a work offer after applying). The fact that the VB-G RAM G Act omits this provision is neither here nor there. Mr. Chauhan's claim that the VB-G RAM G Act removes "disentitlement provisions that had the effect of denying workers their due" is little more than hot air.

Normative funding

Turning to better arguments, one of VB-G RAM G's main selling points is the "shift to normative funding as opposed to an archaic demand-driven approach", as Dr. Soumya Kanti Ghosh, Group Chief Economic Advisor at State Bank of India, puts it. Here, the pretence that VB-G RAM G preserves the principle of employment guarantee is quietly abandoned. Indeed, if there is an employment guarantee, then funding must be "demand-driven". Instead, the assumption here is that most States will not spend beyond the "normative allocations" determined by the Centre. That, indeed, is a sensible assumption. The normative allocations are likely to become de facto budget caps, as the critics of VB-G RAM G have argued from the word go.

The advocates of "normative funding" make a virtue of these budget caps. They claim, in particular, that normative funding will help to ensure a more equitable distribution of expenditure across States. This concern arises from an alleged imbalance of MGNREGA expenditure in favour of better-off States. As a matter of fact, there is no statistical correlation, across States, between MGNREGA employment per rural household and baseline poverty rates or per capita expenditure. High levels of per household MNREGA employment can be found in poor States (for example, Chhattisgarh) as well as in relatively well-off States (for example, Tamil Nadu), just as low levels of employment can be found in poor as well as better-off States (for example, Bihar and Gujarat, respectively).

Of course, one might still wish for a strong positive correlation across States between baseline poverty and MGNREGA employment. It would certainly be useful if poor States such as Bihar and Jharkhand accounted for a larger share of MGNREGA employment and expenditure. But the imposition of budget caps and cost-sharing is hardly going to help them. A much better approach would be to raise MGNREGA wage rates in the poorer States. That is long overdue.

Employment guarantee is a bold idea that holds much promise not only for India but for the world. There is nothing surprising in the fact that some of India's better-governed States are making more effective use of it than the rest. Many social programmes in India, from school meals to maternity benefits, began in south India and were extended to the whole country in due course. If MGNREGA is also doing better in south India for the time being, there is no reason to press the panic button and slap budget caps. After all, the MGNREGA budget is not very large – barely 0.25% of India's GDP as things stand.

Stray arguments

Another common pitch for VB-G RAM G is that this new Act will eliminate corruption. How so? The provisions for transparency, social audits and so on are much the same as in MGNREGA. The main innovation is relentless insistence, within the Act, on the use of advanced digital technology. But digital technologies are already being used with abandon in MGNREGA. Further, these technologies have a mixed record, to put it mildly. Some have undermined workers' rights and sapped their interest in MGNREGA, often fuelling corruption in the process. When workers are fed up with technical glitches (like their wages being diverted to Airtel wallets, as happened in 2017), it is tempting for them to stop working by the rules and to cooperate instead with a corrupt middleman who uses their job cards and bank accounts to siphon off MGNREGA funds in exchange for a share of the loot. Instead of learning from these failures, the VB-G RAM G Act perpetuates blind faith in digital technology.

I have tried to be generous to the advocates of the VB-G RAM G Act by focusing on their serious arguments. Some of them, however, also indulge in platitudes and fallacies. For instance, they try to credit the VB-G RAM G Act for provisions that are actually copy-pasted or paraphrased from MGNREGA. To illustrate, consider this statement of Tuhin Sinha, national spokesperson for the Bharatiya Janata Party: "Delayed wages were among the most corrosive failures of MGNREGA, undermining trust in the system. VB-G RAM G addresses this head-on by mandating weekly wage payments, with an outer limit of a fortnight." Surely, he knows that this "head-on" provision is copied from MGNREGA? Similarly, when Mr. Chouhan claims that Section 20 of the VB-G RAM G Act "strengthens social audits", he must know that it is more or less identical to Section 17 of MGNREGA.

In short, there is little substance in recent arguments for the replacement of MGNREGA with the VB-G RAM G Act. The main purpose of the new Act seems to be to enable the Modi government to run the show and steal the credit, as happened when the National Food Security Act was repackaged as a bunch of Prime Minister's schemes. Employment guarantee and workers' rights are on the back seat.

India's biggest climate gap could be language

Flavia Lopes

Programme Officer, UNEP India. Views are personal

Balakrishna Pisupati

Head, UNEP India. Views are personal

If there is one serious gap in science communication, it is the language and jargon. In the absence of effective communication based on clearly understandable language that people can relate to and contextualise, science will always be either poorly understood or misunderstood.

The meaning of loss and damage

At recent United Nations climate conferences, few phrases have been repeated as often as 'Loss and Damage'. It has been invoked at negotiations, stitched into drafts, and debated in press briefings as if its meaning were universally understood. But Loss and Damage is not simply a diplomatic vocabulary; it refers to climate impacts that communities cannot adapt to: the destruction of crops and homes, but also the loss of identity, land, traditions, ecosystems, and the quiet erosion of cultural memory. It is meant to capture not just what is broken, but what can never be restored. And yet, somewhere between the global negotiation table and the governance realities on the ground, the meaning collapses.

In India, the language shifts sharply as it moves downstream. Loss becomes *nuksaan aaklan* – an assessment to be filled after a disaster. Damage becomes *haani purti* – compensation calculated through established norms. The broader crisis becomes *aapda, aapda rahat,* or *aapda prabandhan* – administrative categories shaped by decades of disaster response, not by the complex realities of climate change.

So, when global actors speak of 'Loss and Damage finance', it is often understood locally as a little more than post-disaster relief – a far narrower understanding than the international framing, which also encompasses slow-onset impacts, biodiversity loss, the disappearance of ancestral lands, and the erosion of social fabric.

The fuller spectrum of irreversible climate loss collapses into what can be counted, compensated, and closed. This is not a minor semantic problem; it is a governance gap. When climate language narrows, so do the policy responses it enables – even the most ambitious global commitments risk becoming abstractions.

We have more data than ever, but less clarity on where it matters most

Over the past decade, India's climate science has advanced rapidly. We now have district-level heat projections, urban flood models, crop yield simulations, and attribution studies capable of tracing the fingerprints of climate change on specific extreme events. Yet, this capacity has not been matched by investment to make the science usable for decision-makers and communities. The result is a paradox: we have more data than ever, but less clarity on where it matters most.

A district magistrate may receive a vulnerability assessment packed with indices and statistical language, but struggle to translate it into tomorrow's decisions. Communities, meanwhile, also encounter climate messaging through fragmented channels, each using different vocabulary and urgency. Too often, climate communication assumes that more information leads to better decisions. But this approach rarely holds. People don't act simply because they know more; they act when information feels relevant, doable, and aligned with their lived reality.

This is why communication is not a "soft" add-on to climate policy but a core enabler of delivery. Heat advisories that tell people to "stay indoors between 12 and 3 p.m." assume the privilege of being able to stop work. Flood warnings delivered by SMS assume literacy and smartphone access. Meanwhile, risk dashboards proliferate across States and cities, often technically impressive yet underused because they are too complex and not designed around how real decisions are made under pressure.

When climate information is clear, trusted, and grounded in everyday realities, the entire climate ecosystem shifts: policy becomes sharper, communities respond faster, and investments flow towards solutions that work. For instance, Odisha's cyclone preparedness model shows that evacuation success does not come from technology alone. It comes from years of building public confidence in the credibility of alerts issued by the state. Trust becomes a form of infrastructure as critical as shelters or sensors.

Clear communication can similarly strengthen heat preparedness, guide flood response, and help governments justify climate investments by translating risk into everyday consequences: school closures, water shortages, hospital admissions, labour productivity, and crop loss.

What climate communication must deliver

Effective communication begins with use. It turns projections into decisions: not just 'heat index rise', but what it means for school timings, outdoor work, and public health preparedness; not just 'flood return intervals', but how flooding will affect commute routes, household safety, and service delivery in specific neighbourhoods. And it works best when co-created with frontline workers, panchayat leaders, farmers, fisherfolk, teachers, and local journalists.

If we are serious about turning climate science into climate action, it needs a communication framework as intentional as its forecasting systems and policy mechanisms. That means simplifying climate information, localising it for real contexts and languages, humanising science through lived realities, institutionalising communication capacity within government systems, and strengthening media partnerships so risk narratives are understood, trusted, and acted upon.

When communication fails, science stays locked in reports, policies don't translate into practice, and preparedness remains uneven; and when it succeeds, resilience becomes a shared social and political possibility.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Farewell, Tully

Sir William Mark Tully arrived in India as a young BBC reporter and chose to remain here, immersing himself as a careful listener rather than as a passing witness ("Veteran journalist and author Mark Tully passes away at 90", Jan. 27). Over decades, he reported on India's most turbulent chapters — the 1971 Bangladesh war, the Emergency, Operation Blue Star, the assassinations of Indira and Rajiv Gandhi, and the Babri Masjid demolition. He engaged with villagers, clergy, politicians, sceptics, and believers, grasping India's silences and contradictions. Through works such as 'No Full Stops in India' and 'India in Slow Motion', he challenged Western stereotypes, writing with empathy, balance and restraint. His death marks the loss of a rare chronicler who explained India with depth, dignity, and insight.

R.S. Narula
Patiala

Recognised after death

Actor Dharmendra lived till the age of 89. Former Chief Minister of Kerala V.S. Achuthanandan lived for 101 years ("Nation honours 131 personalities with Padma awards", Jan. 27). Did it not occur to this government or any of the previous governments to honour them during their lifetime with the Padma Vibhushan?

T. S. Sanath Kumar
Thrissur

Corrections & Clarifications

In the 'Ground Zero' report, "Trial by social media" (January 24, 2026), the reference to Section 109 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita was incorrect. It should have been Section 108 of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita, relating to abetment to suicide.

The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28576347/28576300; E-mail:readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

To read more letters online, scan the QR code.
Letters to be emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in

Cybercrime and a global governance crisis

Vivan Sharan
Public policy expert, Koan Advisory Group, New Delhi

Sukanya Thapliyal
Public policy expert, Koan Advisory Group, New Delhi

Late last year, the United Nations (UN) convened a signing ceremony for the seminal new 'Convention against Cybercrime', the only multilateral criminal justice instrument to be negotiated in over two decades. India was among the many large member states that didn't sign the convention, along with the United States, Japan and Canada, indicating fractures in the global governance of cyberspace. The text adopted by the General Assembly in December 2024 received support from 72 countries.

Conceived through a resolution proposed by Russia in 2017, the Convention represents the culmination of negotiations among the UN members, with inputs from civil society experts and private sector actors. It took eight formal sessions and five intersessional consultations for the UN to generate some consensus. This saga underlines challenges in global governance which implicate India. An uncertain global order, coupled with a widening gulf between international legal principles and their practice, may lead to a polycentrism that the country is not fully equipped to handle.

Uncertain allegiances

Russia and China collaborated to bring the UN Convention to fruition. Theirs was a united front to reshape the status quo of global cyber governance frameworks, which so far hinged on the 2001 Budapest Convention on Cybercrime, a European effort with 76 parties, not involving either Russia or China. The Budapest Convention limits accession to only invited states and is therefore inherently non-inclusive, and India fittingly stayed out of it.

Conversely, the UN Convention is open to all, but still saw a lot of division. The Europeans signed it because it borrows definitions and even substantive procedure from their Budapest Convention. It would seem incongruent for them not to join. A July 2025 EU Council document justified this decision as a means to ensure that it has a "meaningful voice early in the implementation" of the new framework.

The Americans were sceptical of the Sino-Russian effort. Several of their civil society groups also warned that the Convention's broad definition of serious crimes, could enable prosecution of journalists, activists, or political opponents of authoritarian leaders.

India's reluctance to sign perhaps represents a different calculus. Unlike in the case of the Budapest Convention, New Delhi actively engaged in the negotiations of the UN Convention. But its proposals, such as those aimed at retaining greater institutional control over its citizens' data, were not retained. The country has not got its way in global rulemaking over the last two decades, eroding gains made in the early days of the climate change conventions where it united a group of 77 developing countries.

Russia and China perhaps see a weakened UN as worthy platform to legitimise an otherwise cynical worldview, the Europeans and other receding powers cling on to the high-table, a revivalist U.S. doesn't want to hand over the keys to the kingdom, and an ever-cautious India does not want to give up institutional control. The divisions seen in Hanoi even cut across plurilateral groups such as the Quad and the Five Eyes and underscores that the intricate geopolitics of today.

Principles-practice rift

The UN Convention also exposes a widening gap between international legal principles and on-ground realities. The definition of cybercrime in the Convention is not precise enough to limit it to areas of consensus. Instead, it allows signatories to stretch the scope of criminal offences, potentially to the detriment of human rights. Standard procedural safeguards, such as the need for judicial review in criminal law, are tethered to the prevailing domestic frameworks of the signing parties.

Consensus on principles masks large divergences in practice. India's rulemaking efforts on watermarking of AI-generated content on social media is a recent example. It anchors on the universally accepted principle of user-safety. But the draft rules envision a potential mandate that social media companies carry labels that cover 10% of the body of any AI-generated content, an exceptionally prescriptive means of implementing an accepted principle.

Polycentricism

Global governance is facing a serious crisis that is no cause for celebration. The U.S. has significantly curtailed its financial contributions to the UN. The impotence of the Security Council is evident in modern conflicts from Ukraine to Gaza. The World Trade Organization's dispute-settlement system has been paralysed since 2019.

The emerging global order relegates multilateralism to high-level principles, and depends on smaller, plurilateral or bilateral groups for consensus on operating clauses. But this leads to polycentricism, with institutional overlaps and interactions that continually test state-capacity. Attempts at international governance of cross-border data flows has seen this play out, and so now will cybercrime. The idea that data should flow between trusted partners is near universal, but mechanisms to realise this are not.

India will struggle to retain its much-cherished institutional autonomy in global governance unless it builds technical capacities to engage on several levels all at once. Domestically, the canvas for regulatory and administrative reforms is vast, and the hour of action is here.

The emerging global order relegates multilateralism to high-level principles, and depends on smaller groups for consensus on operating clauses

When politics met policy shortcuts

Pragmatic approach, not rhetoric, will resolve water woes of A.P. and Telangana

STATE OF PLAY

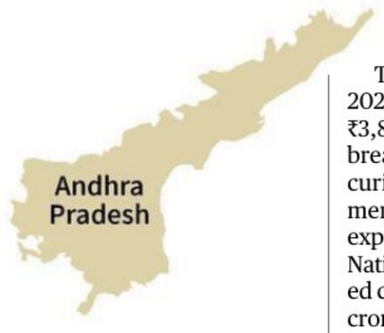
G.V.R. Subba Rao
subbarao.gavaravarapu@thehindu.co.in

A single statement by Telangana Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy in the State Assembly has ignited a major political controversy in Andhra Pradesh. Mr. Reddy's claim that Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu halted the Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Scheme (RLIS) at his request has transformed what was originally a technical and environmental project into a potent symbol of alleged political capitulation, regional betrayal, and inter-State manoeuvring over Krishna river waters. Former Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has seized upon the reported remark to accuse Mr. Naidu of "selling out Rayalaseema" for vested interests.

From Telangana's perspective, the statement burnishes Mr. Revanth Reddy's image as a leader capable of protecting his State's water interests. From Andhra Pradesh's vantage point, however, it has reopened an old wound, reinforcing a long-standing fear that Rayalaseema remains a negotiable terrain in inter-State politics.

This controversy cannot be dismissed as a mere political escalation of what was otherwise a technical disagreement over environmental clearances, statutory norms, or tribunal procedures. At its core lies a deliberate silence by the political leaderships of both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana on binding legal constraints that they find inconvenient.

Crucially, both governments have chosen to keep under the carpet Government Order No. 69, issued during



the undivided Andhra Pradesh regime, as well as the explicit provisions of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014. The Act leaves no room for selective memory: all Government Orders issued by successive governments of the combined State are binding on both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

GO 69 clearly restricts water drawal below the minimum draw down level (MDDL) of the Srisailam reservoir exclusively for drinking water purposes. Despite this, both States have pursued ambitious lift irrigation projects – RLIS in Andhra Pradesh and the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme (PRLIS) in Telangana – pushing against these legal constraints while publicly accusing each other of impropriety. By design, both projects violate the provisions of GO 69 and the Reorganisation Act, revealing a shared pattern of selective compliance that erodes inter-State trust and political accountability.

The PRLIS in Telangana lifts water at around the 800-foot level of the Srisailam reservoir to benefit drought-prone districts such as Mahabubnagar and Rangareddy, while the RLIS proposes drawal at about the 840-foot level. At the heart of the dispute lies a fundamental question: who lifts how much water, from where, and under what legal sanction?

The RLIS, conceived in 2020 at a projected cost of ₹3,825 crore, advanced at breakneck speed without securing mandatory environmental clearances– a gamble exposed in July 2021 when the National Green Tribunal halted construction. By then, ₹883 crore had already been spent, largely through loans.

Official records of the Andhra Pradesh government contradict claims that the RLIS has been abandoned. Government Order No. 44, issued in July 2025, which lists all pending irrigation projects in the State, does not indicate that the RLIS has been shelved.

The RLIS case presents two defensible policy choices. The first is for the Andhra Pradesh government to secure all statutory, environmental, and inter-State clearances and complete the project. This would protect the substantial investment already made through interest-bearing loans, prevent waste of public funds, and deliver tangible benefits to farmers and residents.

The second option is to prioritise the completion of long-pending, legally sanctioned irrigation projects in Rayalaseema as it would ease water stress without triggering fresh inter-State disputes or legal complications.

The RLIS episode underscores the dangers of subordinating law, regulatory compliance, and sustainable planning to political optics or engineering ambition. The choice before Andhra Pradesh is stark: either ensure completion with legality and accountability or perpetuate a cycle of delay, inefficiency, and political theatre. Rayalaseema's water security will ultimately depend not on rhetoric, but on policy clarity and administrative courage.

Venezuela's oil collapse is plunging Cuba into crisis

The U.S.'s invasion of Venezuela has triggered power cuts, fuel shortages and food supply disruptions in Cuba

DATA POINT

Devyanshi Bihani
Srinivasan Ramani

Among the nearly 100 people who died during the U.S. military incursion in Venezuela that led to the abduction of President Nicolas Maduro, there were 32 Cubans who were part of Mr. Maduro's security detail. Their presence reflects the intricate relations shared between Havana and Caracas.

Ever since Venezuela has been ruled by the Bolivarians, a movement led by former President Hugo Chavez, it has forged close ties with Cuba. Caracas has served as Cuba's main source of imported oil under the "oil-for-doctors" scheme – Venezuela supplying subsidised crude in exchange for medical services, technology, and military assistance. **(Chart 1)** This was a major salve for a country starved of power supplies because of years of an economic embargo, called a blockade by the Cubans, imposed by the U.S.

But the recent U.S. seizures of Venezuela-linked oil tankers has cut off deliveries to Cuba almost entirely since December 2025. This triggered a chain reaction of shortages – prolonged power cuts, fuel shortages, and transportation and food supply disruptions.

Cuba's oil dependency is structural. Oil accounts for 83% of total power generation. The power generated from oil rose steadily from about 12,700 GWh in 2000 to 16,500 GWh in 2023. **(Chart 2)**. Notably, oil products make up 56% of Cuba's total energy consumption, feeding industry, transport, agriculture, and households.

The energy crunch does not just dim the lights; it disrupts Cuba's food supply chains. The country imports roughly 80% of its food, and prolonged blackouts interrupt refrigeration that are vital for preserving perishables.

In 2022, Venezuela supplied 75% of Cuba's crude oil imports, with Russia accounting for the remaining 25%. But by 2023, Cuba began diversifying: Venezuela's share dropped to 58%, Mexico emerged as a significant supplier at 31%, and Russia's share fell to 11%. **(Chart 3)**.

By 2025, oil imports from Venezuela had shrunk drastically. Reuters reporting shows Venezuela sent roughly 26,500 barrels per day to Cuba in 2025, covering about one-third of its daily needs. Mexico supplied about 5,000 bpd, while Russia and other allies contributed only limited amounts. Moreover, the Mexican President has explicitly said that the country is not scaling up output to meet Cuba's escalating needs.

The dire situation Cuba faces is largely a result of the long-running U.S. embargo, which began in 1962 following the Cuban Revolution and nationalisation of industries, including foreign-owned ones. The U.S. tightened the embargo significantly with multiple legislations in the 1990s.

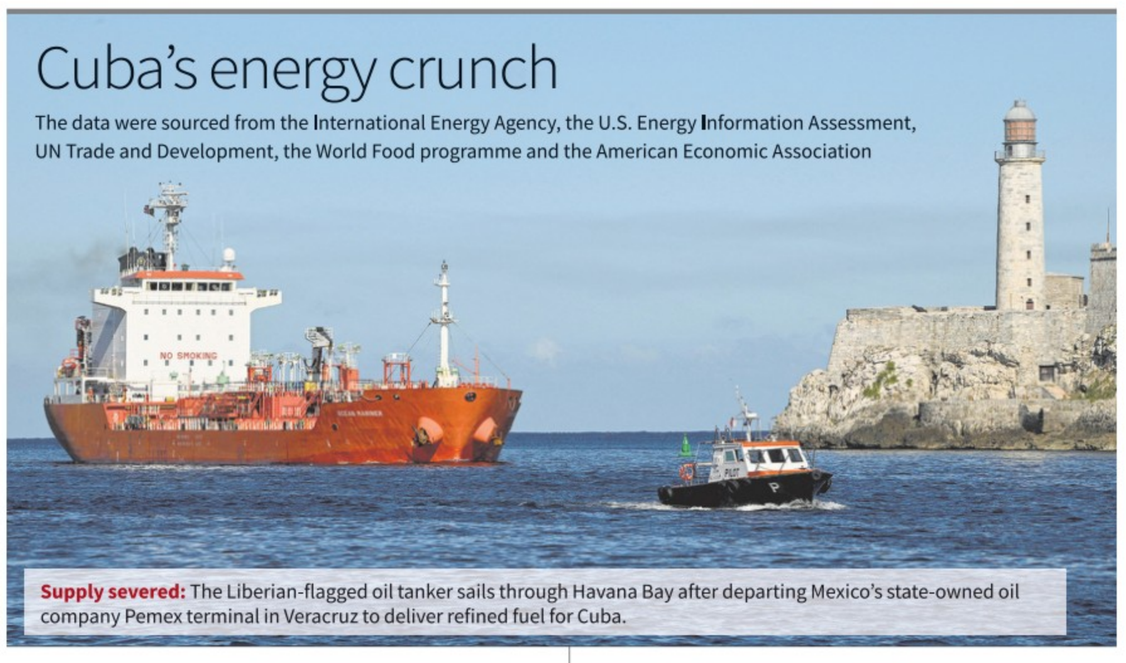
The embargo has also resulted in Cuba's financial exclusion from world trade, since all dollar transactions must clear through American banks. The U.S. redesignation of Cuba as a "State Sponsor of Terrorism" in 2021 deepened this isolation; Cuban authorities have documented over 1,000 instances of foreign banks refusing services between 2021 and 2024.

UNCTAD data shows Cuba sliding from modest trade surpluses in the mid-2000s to deep and persistent deficits. By 2022, the trade deficit stood at $4.4 billion; it further deteriorated to $13.9 billion in 2023, the worst figure in the series. **(Chart 4)**

With no purchasing power and restricted access to credit markets, Cuba cannot simply buy oil on commercial terms. The collapse of the Venezuelan arrangement following the U.S. invasion has exacerbated Cuba's foreign exchange crisis and severely crippled its economy.

Cuba's energy crunch

The data were sourced from the International Energy Agency, the U.S. Energy Information Assessment, UN Trade and Development, the World Food programme and the American Economic Association



Supply severed: The Liberian-flagged oil tanker sails through Havana Bay after departing Mexico's state-owned oil company Pemex terminal in Veracruz to deliver refined fuel for Cuba.

CHART 1: Exports of professional services from Cuba and oil imports from Venezuela to Cuba from 2004 to 2018

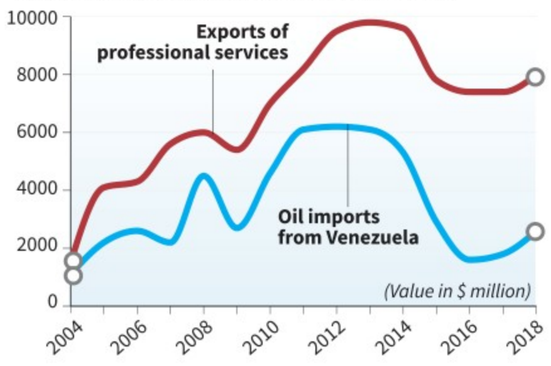


CHART 2: Units of electricity generated using oil in Cuba from 2020 to 2024

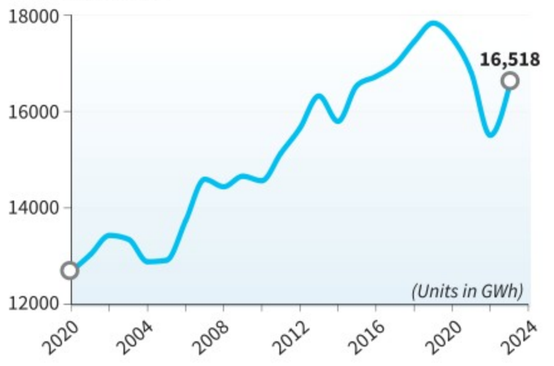


CHART 3: Cuba's crude oil import sources in 2022 and 2023

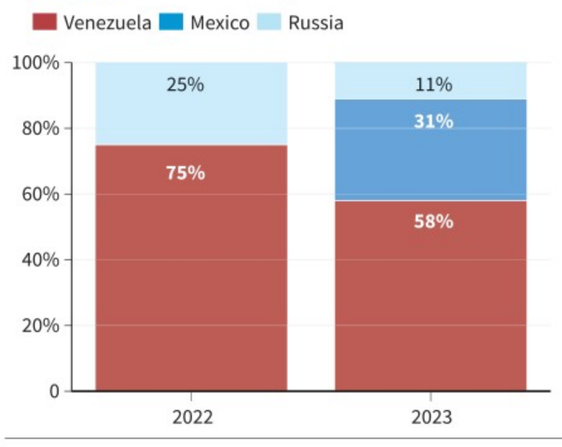
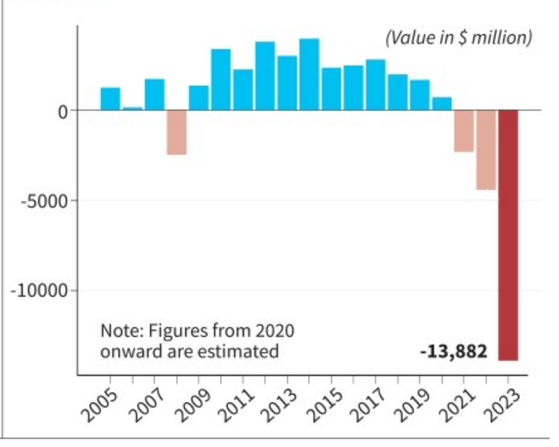


CHART 4: Cuba's trade balance from 2005 to 2023



FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO JANUARY 27, 1976

IAS candidates may have to sit for screening test

New Delhi, Jan. 26.: The Union Public Service Commission is thinking of streamlining the whole scheme of examinations for the Indian Administrative Service and other Central services so as to make it more fool-proof and ensure that only the right type of candidates finally get into the posts.

From a little over 11,000 who appeared for the IAS and allied services in 1970, the figure has swelled to nearly 30,000 in 1975. The increase has become more pronounced in the last three or four years.

Though the vacancies and the jobs for which the examinations are held have also risen, the Commission is faced with the problem of having to select the right type of persons from a very large number of young men and women. It has also become a little difficult to get the required number of suitable examiners to value the scripts.

One of the many suggestions that have been considered is that there should be a preliminary screening examination especially for the IAS. Those who qualify in the first test alone will be entitled to take the final examination. The details of this proposal, which is likely to be finally accepted by the Commission, are being worked out.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JANUARY 27, 1926

Robbery in Nizam's palace

Secunderabad, Jan. 26: A daring robbery was committed in Falaknuma Palace of H. E. H. the Nizam a few days ago. It was discovered that two very ancient sets of chess made of Zahr Mohra and Sung Shub (very precious stone) and glass made of ancient bidar were missing from Sandalki Makhan of Falaknuma Palace.

On information being sent to the Police, Mr. Venkataramana Reddy, City Kotwal, and Nawab Mohamad Nawaz Jung, Director of the District Police, visited the scene and concluded the theft might have been committed by guards. Further investigation showed that a guard named Syed Ismail was absent from duty since the incident.

The Police traced him to his native place Kohir in Bidar district and caught him while he was trying to dispose of Bidar glass and arrested him. Some pieces of chess were recovered from his house and one piece from the Musi river under Chadarghat bridge.

From Page One

India and EU close in on FTA as negotiations end

"An opportunity to recall the importance of the action of the EU Naval Forces to enhance maritime security and protect the freedom of navigation, in particular in the Indo Pacific," Mr. Costa said on social media, steering clear of any contentious references to the war in Europe.

Monday's parade also saw EU defence commanders taking part in the event for the first time, while the EU Presidents were later hosted at Rashtrapati Bhawan by President Droupadi Murmu.

Significantly, much of the hardware that Ms. von der Leyen and Mr. Costa witnessed in Monday's parade was Russian-made or designed and has been sanctioned under various EU sanction packages since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February 2022.

The EU-India FTA conclusion marks the end of a two-decades-old process, after talks were first launched in 2007. The talks have faltered on a number of occasions, particularly over seemingly irreconcilable issues like market access for "sensitive" European agricultural and dairy items, environmental regulations, investment and immigration. After a freeze on talks between 2014 and 2022, the talks were relaunched with more pragmatic goals, and both sides have reportedly agreed to set aside sectors where they failed to find common ground. Once the FTA is announced on Tuesday, officials will complete the legal scrubbing, and it will be sent to all 27 EU states after being translated, before it is ratified by the European Parliament.

With bilateral trade already crossing $136 billion, the sources also said that this would be "one of the biggest" bilateral deals in the world. Unlike ASEAN countries, the EU acts as a single customs bloc, they explained. The EU has FTAs with eight countries and has signed an FTA with the South American bloc MERCOSUR earlier this month. Both India and the EU are also expected to upgrade their strategic partnership, first concluded in 2004, and upgrade defence cooperation and military engagement in areas including maritime security, cyber security and counter-terrorism.

Canadian PM denies FTA plans with China

The U.S. President had claimed otherwise, posting that "China is successfully and completely taking over the once Great Country of Canada. So sad to see it happen."

In 2024, Canada mirrored the U.S. by putting a 100% tariff on electric vehicles from Beijing and a 25% tariff on steel and aluminium. China had responded by imposing 100% import taxes on Canadian canola oil and meal and 25% on pork and seafood. Breaking with the U.S. this month during a visit to China, Mr. Carney cut its 100% tariff on Chinese electric cars in return for lower tariffs on those Canadian products.

Mr. Trump posted a video Sunday in which the chief executive of the Canadian Vehicle Manufacturers' Association warns there will be no Canadian auto industry without U.S. access, while noting the Canadian market alone is too small to justify large scale manufacturing from China.

"A MUST WATCH. Canada is systematically destroying itself. The China deal is a disaster for them. Will go down as one of the worst deals, of any kind, in history. All their businesses are moving to the USA. I want to see Canada SURVIVE AND THRIVE! President DJT," Trump posted on social media.

Mr. Trump's post on Saturday said that if Mr. Carney "thinks he is going to make Canada a 'Drop Off Port' for China to send goods and products into the United States, he is sorely mistaken."

"We can't let Canada become an opening that the Chinese pour their cheap goods into the U.S," U.S. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said on ABC's This Week.

"We have a (United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement), but based off – based on that, which is going to be renegotiated this summer, and I'm not sure what Prime Minister Carney is doing here, other than trying to virtue-signal to his globalist friends at Davos."

Mr. Trump's threat came amid an escalating war of words with Mr. Carney as the Republican president's push to acquire Greenland strained the NATO alliance.

7 feared dead as fire guts warehouse in Kolkata

West Bengal Minister for Fire and Emergency Services Sujit Bose said that the department has been monitoring the situation since morning. "We cannot say that there is no fire audit. But some people give more priority to business than to human lives. Why do so many people stay inside a warehouse at night?" the Minister said. He questioned why an industrial unit was operating in the East Kolkata Wetlands area.

West Bengal Leader of Opposition Suvendu Adhikari said that the incident is a reflection of the fact that there is no government in the State.

The fire in Anandpur has revived memories of previous fatal blazes in the city, including the April 2025 fire at a hotel in Burrabazar that claimed 14 lives. Kolkata has witnessed several major fire incidents in recent years, most notably the 2011 fire at AMRI Hospital, in which over 90 people were killed.

Method to count caste during Census not yet decided, clarity likely by July: officials

Opposition parties such as the Congress and Samajwadi Party had questioned BJP-led Union government over absence of expanded caste column in the questionnaire of the first phase of Census published last week; however, officials say caste will be enumerated only in the second and final phase

Vijaita Singh
NEW DELHI

The methodology to be followed for caste enumeration in the forthcoming Census is yet to be finalised and the preparatory exercise for it will likely be done by July, government sources said.

Opposition parties such as the Congress and the Samajwadi Party have questioned the Bharatiya Janata Party-led Union government for the absence of an expanded caste column in the questionnaire of the first phase of the Census which was published last week. The parties asked whether the Centre really intended to hold a caste count along with the Population Census, 2027.

However, the final questionnaire for caste enumeration is likely to be known only in September, when Population Enumeration (PE), the second phase of Census 2027, kicks off in Ladakh and snow-bound areas of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, ahead of the rest of the country. Caste count in all other States will be held during the PE phase in February 2027.

This will be the 16th Census and the first in Independent India to count castes other than the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST), the government has said.

Unlike the 2011 Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC), which was done outside the purview of the Census, caste will be enumerated this time in the second and final phase, giving it statutory backing.

The SECC enumerated more than 46 lakh castes while the total number of castes during the pre-Independence 1931 Census was 4,147.

> Congress demands the Modi government initiate consultations with parties, States, and civil society organisations before finalising details of the caste census process... The way Question 12 has been framed raises serious questions about the government's true intentions...
>
> **JAIRAM RAMESH**
> Congress leader

Digital collection

This will also be the first time that Census data is captured digitally, on smartphones and mobile apps and the first time when citizens will be able to self-enumerate through a yet-to-be announced portal.

The Census will be done in two phases, with the Houselisting and Housing Census (HLO) to be held from April-September 2026 and the PE phase in February 2027. The Registrar-General and Census Commissioner of India (RG&CCI) notified 33 questions for the HLO phase on January 22. Question number 12 in the questionnaire was: "Whether the head of the household is Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe/Others."

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh said that Question 12 did not explicitly seek information on Other Backward Classes (OBC) and General categories.

"Since caste enumeration is to be part of Census 2027, Question 12 as formulated does raise serious questions on the Modi Government's true intentions and on its commitment to a comprehensive, fair, nation-wide caste census," Mr. Ramesh posted on X.

He said the Congress wanted the government to immediately initiate a dialogue with political parties, State governments, and civil society organisations before finalising the details of the caste enumeration exercise.

"Such consultations were an integral part of the SEEEPC [Socio-Economic, Educational, Employment, Political, and Caste] Survey that was carried out by the Telangana Government in 2025 and which remains the most comprehensive and meaningful way to gather vital caste-wise information on education, employment, income, and political engagement – which are so very essential for ensuring greater economic and social justice," he said.

On Saturday, Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav had also accused the government of dithering on caste census.

The 2011 schedule or the questionnaire for the HLO phase also had the same question at serial number 15. The details of SC/ST column were filled in the second phase through the Centrally approved list. While the OBC list can be maintained both by the State and Centre, SC/ST names are maintained only by Centre. According to the latest government data, there are about 2,650 OBC castes on the Central list, 1,170 in the SC category and 890 on the ST list.

Whether the "Other" column will have a merged Central and State OBC list or a list of unreserved categories of caste is yet to be decided. In fact, the pretest or the preparatory exercise of the Census, which was done from November 10-30, 2025 for the first time covered only the HLO phase as the caste methodology is yet to be decided.

In the past, the preparatory exercise covered both the phases simultaneously.

A State government official said the pre-test for the PE phase will have to be completed by July as the snow-bound States would complete both the phases in September.

IAF achieved air superiority over Pak. in Sindoor: Swiss think tank

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

A report by Switzerland-based Centre for Military History and Perspective Studies (CHPM) has stated that by the morning of May 10, 2025, the Indian Air Force (IAF) had achieved air superiority over significant portions of Pakistani airspace, enabling it to conduct long-range precision strikes against enemy infrastructure with relative freedom.

Authored by military historian Adrien Fontanellaz, the report reveals that India's ability to sustain stand-off attacks depended largely on the availability of advanced munitions such as BrahMos and SCALP-EG cruise missiles.

In contrast, the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) progressively lost its capacity to replicate the complex air operations it had carried out successfully on May 7, following the destruction of forward air-surveillance radars and the growing threat posed by India's S-400 air defence systems to Pakistani AWACS and stand-off strike platforms.

Pakistani strikes between May 7 and 10 were largely neutralised by Indian defences.

Wing Commander Vyomika Singh (left) and Colonel Sofiya Qureshi address the media on Operation Sindoor on May 7, 2025. ANI

The CHPM report notes that on May 7, one of two Indian strike formations – comprising Rafale or Mirage 2000I fighter aircraft – penetrated Pakistani airspace at very low altitude before executing pop-up manoeuvres to release precision-guided bombs. The aircraft continued to guide the munitions until impact, deliberately exposing themselves to interception by Pakistani fighters and engagement by ground-based air defence systems.

As early as the morning of May 7, Pakistani artillery opened fire along the Line of Control, prompting immediate Indian retaliation. Later that night, the PAF launched a large-scale offensive involving more than 300 drones, JF-17 fighters, and CM-400AKG missiles. Pakistani forces focused their attacks on India's Rafale fighters, treating them as priority targets for their symbolic value. Islamabad claimed that within an hour, it shot down six Indian aerial platforms – three Rafales, one Su-30MKI, one MiG-29UPG and a large drone – inside Indian airspace, using both fighter aircraft and a surface-to-air missile battery.

The IAF did not comment on losses, stating only that all pilots involved were safe, the report reads.

The drone swarms targeted Indian Army forward posts, command headquarters, logistics nodes and air bases, while also attempting to trigger Indian air-defence radars for electronic intelligence collection. The PAF employed Songar armed drones, Yihaa-III (Turkish designed) suicide drones, and conducted cyberattacks against military and civilian targets. Higher-altitude Bayraktar TB2 and Akinci drones were used alongside Pakistan Army salvos of Fatah-I and Fatah-II rockets and Hatf-II ballistic missiles.

Despite the scale of the assault, the report states that Pakistan failed to saturate Indian air defences. Most incoming munitions were intercepted, and Indian surface-to-air missile batteries repeatedly relocated to avoid detection.

Detecting preparations for another Pakistani strike on May 9, India launched a swift counterstrike. Between 2 a.m. and 5 a.m. on May 10, the IAF fired BrahMos, SCALP-EG and Rampage missiles from within Indian airspace using Su-30MKIs, Jaguars and Rafales. Seven targets up to 200 km inside Pakistan were struck, including a surface-to-air missile battery and five airbases, the report reads.

Canada PM Carney likely to visit Delhi in March: Indian envoy

Reuters
OTTAWA

Canada's Prime Minister Mark Carney will likely visit India in the first week of March and sign deals on uranium, energy, minerals, and artificial intelligence, Dinesh Patnaik, India's High Commissioner to Canada, said in an interview.

Mark Carney

Mr. Carney is making all out efforts to diversify Canada's alliances beyond the U.S., its top trade partner. In Davos last week, he earned a rare standing ovation for saying the old rules-based order is over and called on middle powers such as Canada to build coalitions to shape a fairer, more resilient world.

His viral speech followed an agreement with China to slash tariffs on electric vehicles and canola, and open up to Canadian $7 billion ($5.11 billion) in export markets as he tries to double non-U.S. exports over the next decade.

Mr. Carney is also resetting relations with India after his predecessor Justin Trudeau accused the Indian government of involvement in the killing of a Sikh separatist leader in 2023. India has denied those claims.

"I have a feeling in the first week of March is what we are looking at," India's High Commissioner Mr. Patnaik said on Mr. Carney's visit during a weekend interview. Mr. Carney's office declined to comment.

Canada's Energy Minister Tim Hodgson is visiting India this week, and said the timing of Mr. Carney's trip was not yet set.

"There are plans for the Prime Minister to visit at some point this year, it will depend on the progress we make," Mr. Hodgson said in a Sunday interview.

In bid to shed 'election-only' tag, Congress tries out year-round grassroots model in Jharkhand

Sandeep Phukan
NEW DELHI

The Congress has long battled the perception that its workers surface on the ground only in the run-up to elections and disappear thereafter. In Jharkhand, the All India Congress Committee (AICC) in-charge, K. Raju, is attempting to challenge that narrative through an organisational model aimed at sustained, year-round engagement.

Mr. Raju, a bureaucrat-turned-politician, has drawn up a year-long calendar of activities involving party workers and leaders across nearly 4,350 gram panchayats in the State. "Over the last 10 months, since I was given the responsibility as AICC in-charge, my focus has been on taking the Congress organisation to the grassroots and making it active at the village level," Mr. Raju said in an interaction with *The Hindu*.

At the grassroots, gram panchayat Congress committees – each comprising 12 members representing different communities – have been constituted after consultations in every panchayat. Each member has been issued a formal appointment order, designed to be framed and displayed at home. The committees are mandated to meet once every month on prescheduled dates.

"The idea is simple: villagers should know that on a particular day every month, the Congress committee meets, and that they can approach it with their grievances and issues," Mr. Raju said, adding that the aim was to make the party "visible on a daily basis – listening, working, and responding".

Congress workers at a protest rally over the Centre's decision to replace MGNREGA, in Ranchi.

According to him, the process has been institutionalised across all 4,350 gram panchayats and more than 1,000 municipal wards. The committees are guided on identifying local issues and working on them consistently.

Mandal committees

Beyond the village level, mandal committees – covering five to 10 panchayats – have been formed, above which are 312 Block Congress Committees. Each block committee consists of 12 members, including a president, two vice-presidents, and nine general secretaries, and is tasked with monitoring the functioning of the organisation at the grassroots.

With the structure in place, the party is now taking up issues that resonate with local communities. The first is the effective implementation of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act, 1996, which seeks to strengthen panchayati raj institutions while protecting tribal traditions.

Another issue taken up by village-level committees is the party's ongoing protests against the proposed replacement of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act with the Vikshit Bharat-Guarantee for Rozgar Ajeevika Mission (Gramin).

Probe on into conference at IIT-Delhi on caste and race

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Over a week after a conference was held at the Indian Institute Of Technology, Delhi on "Critical philosophy of caste and race", the institute has decided to investigate "serious concerns" raised about its "content" and "choice of speakers", it said in a statement on Monday.

In its statement, the IIT noted it had sought an explanation from the "faculty concerned".

The theme of the conference was "Indian contributions to combating caste and racism".

Nation's pride: India's soft power and military might melded at the Republic Day parade in New Delhi on Monday. **1:** CRPF and Sashastra Seema Bal women personnel defy gravity; **2:** the 61 Cavalry team in battle gear; **3:** the newly raised Bhairav battalion makes its debut; **4:** the Union Culture Ministry tableau marking 150 years of *Vande Mataram*; **5:** Antonio Costa, President of the European Council, Ursula von der Leyen, President of the European Commission and Prime Minister Narendra Modi; and **6:** double-humped Bactrian camels and Zanskar ponies of the armed forces trot down Kartavya Path. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA/ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR/PTI/ANI

India, China are 'friends, partners', says Xi Jinping

Reuters
HONG KONG

Chinese President Xi Jinping said China and India were "good neighbours, friends and partners" as he wished President Droupadi Murmu on the occasion of the 77th Republic Day celebrations, the official *Xinhua* news agency reported on Monday.

Mr. Xi said that over the past year, China-India relations had continued to improve and develop and were of "great significance for maintaining and promoting world peace and prosperity", according to *Xinhua*. China has always believed that being "good neighbours, friends and partners" is the right choice for both China and India, Mr. Xi said.

He referred to China and India as the "dragon and the elephant dancing together", the *Xinhua* said.

Mr. Xi said he hoped that both sides would expand cooperation and address each other's concerns.

Ties between the countries were shaken by a 2020 clash in which 20 Indian and four Chinese soldiers were killed.

Military might meets heritage of the nation on Kartavya Path

President leads ceremony marked by gaiety and patriotic fervour; 100 artists came together to kick-start the celebration on the theme of unity in diversity; EU military contingent participates; tri-services tableau showcases weapon systems

Alisha Dutta
Suruchi Kumari
NEW DELHI

India celebrated its 77th Republic Day on Monday with a grand display of military prowess and cultural heritage, as missiles, armed forces battalions and artists competed for attention on Kartavya Path. While the 150th year celebrations of the National Song, *Vande Mataram*, was the prominent theme, the event celebrated the country's successes during last year's "Operation Sindoor".

President Droupadi Murmu presided over the event. President of the European Council, Antonio Costa and President of the European Commission Ursula von der Leyen were the chief guests. Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted Ms. Murmu and the chief guests, who arrived in traditional horse-drawn buggies, at the podium. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and several other Union Ministers, top military officials, foreign diplomats, and senior officials were among the spectators.

Big honour: President Droupadi Murmu confers Ashoka Chakra on Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla on Monday. ANI

The celebrations began with Ms. Murmu conferring India's highest peacetime gallantry award, Ashoka Chakra, on Group Captain Shubhanshu Shukla for being the first Indian to set foot on the International Space Station.

Over 100 artists came together to kick-start the celebration on the theme of *Vividata Mein Ekta* (unity in diversity), performing with traditional musical instruments from across the country, to demonstrate the nation's rich cultural diversity. The parade was led by Parade Commander Lieutenant-General Bhavnish Kumar, General Officer Commanding, Delhi Area, a second-generation officer.

A tri-services tableau showcased replicas of major weapon systems deployed by the defence forces during Operation Sindoor in May 2025.

The celebration also saw the parade debut of the newly raised Bhairav Battalion, a specialised assault infantry unit. In addition, a military contingent from the European Union participated. It was the EU's first participation at such an event outside Europe.

A total of 30 tableaux – 17 of States and Union Territories and 13 of various Ministries and Departments – rolled down Kartavya Path. Showcasing India's first Water Metro, Kerala's tableau depicted the State's achievement of 100% digital literacy and green mobility. Chhattisgarh's tableau, themed "The Mantra of Freedom, *Vande Mataram*", paid tribute to tribal freedom fighters while Gujarat's tableau highlighted *Vande Mataram* and honoured Bhikaji Cama, underlining the State's role in the freedom movement. This year, the enclosures for the parade were named after the rivers of the nation.

Tribute to 150 years of *Vande Mataram*

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

Walls made of hoardings featuring all six stanzas of the *Vande Mataram* welcomed attendees at the Republic Day celebrations on Monday, marking the 150th year of the National Song.

The hoardings featured a series of paintings created by Tejendra Kumar Mitra in 1923, illustrating verses of the song, and published in the *Bande Mataram Album* (1923), which were displayed as view-cutters along Kartavya Path. The Culture Ministry's tableau traced the journey of the song across generations.

Constitution is a protective shield for citizen rights: Rahul

The Hindu Bureau
NEW DELHI

The Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi, on Monday said the Constitution was every Indian's greatest weapon and shield as the Congress asserted that its resolve to protect the Constitution was as "strong as a rock".

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge, who unfurled the National Flag at his official residence on the country's 77th Republic Day, said, "We must be prepared to make every necessary sacrifice to safeguard the Constitution. This will be our true tribute to the sacrifices of our ancestors."

Extending his Republic Day greetings to citizens, Mr. Gandhi, who attended the parade on Kartavya Path, said: "Our Constitution is the greatest weapon for every Indian – it is our voice, the protective shield for our rights. Protecting the Constitution is protecting the Indian Republic, it is the truest tribute to the sacrifices of our freedom fighters. Jai Hind! Jai Samvidhan!"

Some Congress leaders criticised the government for not offering front row seats to the Leaders of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha during the parade.

Mr. Kharge and Mr. Gandhi were seen seated in the third row. Towards the end of the event before the National Anthem was played, Mr. Kharge was seen seated next to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and former Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar in the front row. "This shows the mindset of the government, particularly of [Narendra] Modi *ji* and [Home Minister] Amit Shah and the level to which they have stooped," party leader Manickam Tagore said.

BJP slams Rahul for not wearing Assamese Gamosa

NEW DELHI

A row erupted on Monday over Congress leader Rahul Gandhi allegedly refusing to wear an Assamese 'Gamosa' given to all the guests at a reception hosted by President Droupadi Murmu, with the BJP alleging that the Congress leader insulted the northeast. PTI

U.S. and India share a historic bond: Trump

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

The U.S. and India share a historic bond as the world's oldest and largest democracies, U.S. President Donald Trump said on Monday as he greeted India on its 77th Republic Day celebrations.

Mr. Trump's greetings came amid continuing strain in ties between the two countries over a range of issues, including Washington's policies on trade and tariffs. "On behalf of the people of the U.S., I extend my heartfelt congratulations to the government and people of India as you celebrate your 77th Republic Day," he said.

Mr. Trump's message was put out on social media by the U.S. embassy in New Delhi. U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio also extended greetings to India and said the two nations share a "historic bond".

Modi thanks leaders of France and Bhutan

Press Trust of India
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday thanked French President Emmanuel Macron, Bhutan Prime Minister Tshering Tobgay and Cyprus President Nikos Christodoulides for extending greetings on occasion of the 77th Republic Day through posts on social media platform X.

Sindoor weaponry glints on Kartavya Path

Saurabh Trivedi
NEW DELHI

India put military power front and centre at the Republic Day parade on Monday, transforming Kartavya Path into a sweeping display of missiles, armour, mechanised columns, and combat aircraft, with a sharp focus on weapon systems associated with Operation Sindoor.

The military display began with a showcase of key weapon systems, including the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile, Akash air defence system, Suryastra rocket launcher, and Arjun main battle tank, highlighting India's emphasis on battlefield-ready capability and indigenous defence production.

Much of the equipment on display has either featured in, or drawn directly from lessons learned, Operation Sindoor, the May 7-10 conflict with Pakistan.

Suryastra rocket launcher during the 77th Republic Day Parade in New Delhi. PTI

Major attraction

A major attraction was a tri-services tableau that presented replicas of prominent weapon systems deployed during the operation. The parade was led by Lt. General Bhavnish Kumar, General Officer Commanding, Delhi Area, and a second-generation officer. For the first time, the Indian Army showcased a phased "battle array format", including its aerial component. The reconnaissance element featured the historic 61 Cavalry in active combat uniform, followed by high-mobility reconnaissance vehicles. Aerial battlefield shaping was demonstrated by the indigenous Dhruv advanced light helicopter and its armed variant Rudra, flying in Prahar formation.

The Indian Navy tableau traced India's maritime journey from a 5th century stitched ship to modern indigenous platforms such as *INS Vikrant* and *INS Udayagiri*.

The Indian Air Force contingent marched in sync with a dramatic fly-past featuring Rafale, Su-30 MKI, MiG-29 and Jaguar aircraft in 'spearhead' formation, symbolising the Sindoor Formation. Overall, 29 aircraft, including fighters, transport aircraft and helicopters, took part in the fly-past.

‘We like Wikipedia as it is, so we’re going to stick to what we do best’

The founder of the online encyclopaedia says fake news has not affected Wikipedia much ‘because we spend our lives debating the quality of our sources’; he notes that a key challenge with AI today is that it is often very bad at facts; on the U.S., he says, ‘I would like to see us move in a direction of more calm and have leaders who take on the responsibility of behaving respectfully to other people’

INTERVIEW

Jimmy Wales

Julie Merin Varughese

Wikipedia, the world’s largest online encyclopaedia, turned 25 this month. Even as detractors call the platform redundant in the age of AI and large language models (LLMs) such as ChatGPT and Gemini, founder Jimmy Wales remains optimistic. “The world is better off with AI reading Wikipedia. Imagine if it trained only on X,” he told a keen audience at the recent Kerala Literature Festival in Kozhikode, adding that Wikipedia too is making use of AI tools to improve the efficiency of its edits. Edited excerpts:

Do you think there is a deficit of trust in the world today? Or misplaced trust maybe?

Well, those can be kind of the same thing in a way. I always look at the Edelman Trust Barometer survey. This is a survey that’s been done since the year 2000, in many countries around the world. And they’ve seen a steady decline in trust, decline in trust in journalism, in politics, and so forth.

So, there is a decline in trust. But also, one of the side effects of that is, if people truly believe, for example, that all politicians are corrupt and liars, then they still have to choose someone, and so they end up with misplaced trust.

And I think that’s a big problem as well.

How do you look back at 25 years of Wikipedia?

It’s been really great. The thing that I’ve always enjoyed is that we are very community-oriented. So, I travel around, and everywhere I go, I try to meet with local Wikipedians. And they’re very, very sweet nerds, who love knowledge and love researching and sharing what they’ve learned.

During elections or conflicts, concerns about fake news and misinformation often arise. How does Wikipedia address these challenges?

One of the things that we think is very important is journalism. Like serious, proper journalism to get the facts. Obviously, we try to be neutral. But, where

GETTY IMAGES

neutrality is the hardest is where emotions are very high. So we acknowledge that and we understand that. And so that’s always a challenge.

And there are a lot of low-quality information sources, and there is such a thing as fake news. It hasn’t impacted Wikipedia very much because we spend our lives debating the quality of our sources. It’s hard to fool the Wikipedians with a fake website.

In the age of AI and LLMs, what are some of the big challenges for Wikipedia and open knowledge ecosystems in general?

One of the issues is that AI, much to everyone’s surprise, is very bad at facts. I think if you asked anybody 30 years ago, what do you think the first AI that we experience would be like, they would have said it would be very matter-of-fact and very serious and it won’t understand humour at all, and it won’t be creative at all.

It turns out, it’s the exact opposite. The humour’s not very good, but, it’s creative, crazy and makes things up and so forth. But that does mean if people start to use AI assuming that it’s going to be factually correct, they’ll be getting errors and mistakes.

What scares you or concerns you the most about America right now?

Well, like many people, I’m worried about the decline in bipartisanship. If you completely don’t trust the other side, then you lose the ability to make a compromise.

I also worry, and I think anybody should be worried right now, about the apparent rise of authoritarianism and political violence, I think it’s very scary. I would like to see us move in a direction of more calm and have leaders who take on the responsibility of behaving respectfully to other people. I don’t think Donald Trump is going to do that.

Is there a common misconception about Wikipedia among people?

It’s a good question. If you read the news, you’ll find that people assume that Wikipedia is some kind of ideological battleground, where we are warring factions. Actually most of the work in Wikipedia is about obscure, sweet subjects that nobody’s fighting anything about, and that’s really great, and so I think what people don’t realise is that we’re just this nerdy community with a hobby.

What’s next for Wikipedia?

Well, I think the good news is that nothing is going to change radically. People like Wikipedia. We like Wikipedia as it is, so we’re going to stay calm, and obviously the culture wars rage all around us, but we’ll stick to what we do best. Obviously, I think one of the things that I’m really positive and excited about is the growth of Wikipedia in the languages of the world. So here in India, we’ve got, well, 22 languages-plus. There’s some minor dialects as well.

(The writer was at the Kerala Literature Festival 2026 on invitation from DC Books) (Full interview is available on https://newsth.live/2Zv43z)

INBRIEF

Banking operations to be hit amid nationwide strike today

Banking operations of public sector banks across the country are likely to be affected on Tuesday with the United Forum of Bank Unions deciding to go ahead with a nationwide strike on January 27 to press for the immediate implementation of a five-day work week. The strike call by the UFBU, an umbrella body of nine unions representing officers and employees, comes after a meeting on January 23 with the Chief Labour Commissioner failed to yield a positive outcome. With banks remaining closed on January 25 (Sunday) and January 26 (Republic Day), the strike will result in a disruption of branch-level services for three consecutive days. PTI

11 security personnel injured in IED blasts in Chhattisgarh

Eleven security personnel were injured after improvised explosive devices (IEDs) planted by Maoists went off during an anti-Naxalite operation in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district, an official said on Monday. The explosions occurred on Sunday when a joint team of security personnel were out on an anti-Naxalite operation in the Karregutta Hills area in the Usoor police station limits bordering Telangana, he said. Personnel belonging to the District Reserve Guard (DRG) and Bastar Fighters, both units of the state police, and the Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (CoBRA), an elite unit of the CRPF, were involved in the operation, he said. PTI

Uproar intensifies against new UGC equity regulations

Several groups have alleged bias against ‘general category’ students, while anti-caste activists say the new regulations do not adequately protect SC, ST, and OBC students from discrimination

Abhinay Lakshman
Mayank Kumar
NEW DELHI/LUCKNOW

Opposition against the University Grants Commission (UGC)’s new regulations on the promotion of equity in higher education campuses intensified on Monday, with critics questioning the 2026 rules’ definition of “caste-based discrimination” and alleging bias against “general category” students in not providing for measures against “false complaints”.

A writ petition challenging the University Grants Commission (Promotion of Equity in Higher Education Institutions) Regulations, 2026 has been filed in the Supreme Court by Mrityunjay Tiwari, a post-doctoral researcher at the Banaras Hindu University, Uttar Pradesh.

Political opposition to the regulations has also grown. Rajya Sabha member Priyanka Chaturvedi took to social media, calling for the regulations to be “withdrawn or amended as necessary”. Uttar Pradesh Bharatiya Janata Party MLC Devendra Pratap Singh has written to

A writ petition challenging the UGC regulations has been filed in the Supreme Court. FILE PHOTO

the UGC, saying it should be concerned with protecting discrimination against Dalits and backward class students, and not with “making general category students feel unsafe”.

Student bodies have also joined the opposition. The students’ union of Kumaun University in Uttarakhand’s Nainital has submitted a letter to the UGC, saying that the regulations went against the “principle of natural justice”. In their letter, submitted through the Vice-Chancellor of the University, the students’ union said that these regulations may disturb the “balance” at university campuses and could create an atmosphere of “fear and distrust”, potentially leading to the regulations’ “misuse”.

Amid growing criticism, BJP MP from Jharkhand Nishikant Dubey said on social media that “all misconceptions” about the new regulations would soon be addressed.

The UGC notified the 2026 regulations on January 13, updating its 2012 regulations on the same subject. The revised rules defined “caste-based discrimination” as discrimination “only on the basis of caste or tribe” against members of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, and Other Backward Classes, further removing a provision for punishments for false complaints, which was present in a draft circulated in 2025.

These are among the principal issues that opponents of the regulations have cited, arguing that the definition excludes students from the general category. They also said that this would create a presumption of guilt against them.

However, even as the uproar against the regulations gathered steam, some anti-caste activists have argued that the new regulations did not protect the Scheduled Caste, Scheduled Tribe, and Other Backward Classes strongly enough from the discrimination they face.

Nethrapal, a serving IRS officer, articulated this position in a thread on X, saying that the 2026 regulations are missing specific forms of discrimination that SC, ST, and OBC students face during specific higher education processes like admissions, interviews and oral examinations. He also alleged that omnibus equity committees would not be able to address specific discriminations faced by SC/ST students sufficiently.

Char Dham temples seek to prohibit entry of non-Hindus

Ishita Mishra
NEW DELHI

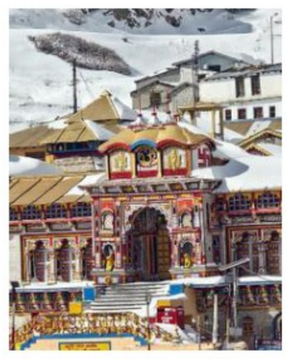
Uttarakhand’s religious leaders and temple caretakers have asked the State government to prohibit the entry of non-Hindus in the Char Dham temples of Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri, and Yamunotri.

These shrines, situated at heights of over 3,000 metres above sea level, are the backbone of the State’s economy and are visited by millions of people from across India every year.

The demand comes weeks after the Ganga Sabha, a trust that manages the religious affairs of the Ganga ghats in Haridwar, demanded a ban on the entry of non-Hindus for the 2027 Kumbh Mela.

Suresh Semwal, head of the Gangotri temple, told *The Hindu* that the temple committee held a meeting last week in which it was unanimously decided that non-Hindus would not be allowed inside the temple. “Non-Hindus will also not be allowed to enter Mukhba, the winter abode of the goddess,” he said.

The Badrinath-Kedarnath Temple Committee has demanded that non-Hindus not be allowed in the shrines. Its chairman, Hemant Dwivedi, said that



The shrines are the backbone of the State’s economy, attracting millions of visitors.

the committee would discuss the proposed ban at its meeting next month and would implement it from the Char Dham Yatra this year. The yatra will start after the portals of the Gangotri and Yamunotri temples are opened in April.

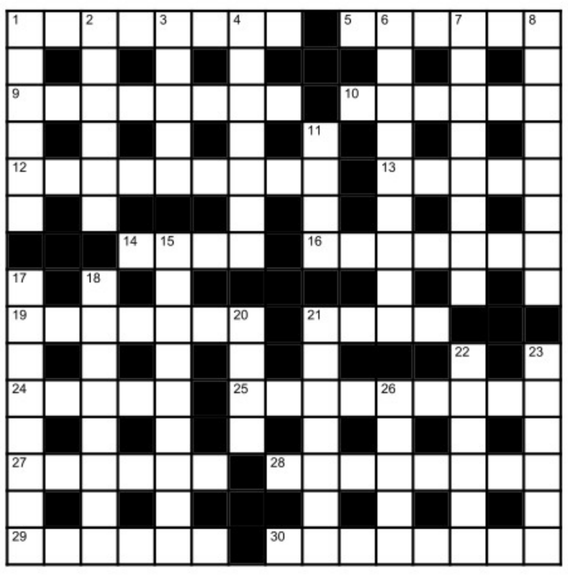
“The Char Dham shrines are not tourist spots, and those who have no faith in Sanatan Dharma must not enter our sacred places,” Mr. Dwivedi said. He asked why those who have no faith in Hindu gods want to visit these temples.

Asked if the temple committee would not allow non-Hindu VIPs who visited these shrines, Mr. Dwivedi said the ban would remain for the temple’s *sanctum sanctorum*.

TH CROSSWORD + 14701
(set by KrisKross)

Solve this puzzle online and access more puzzles at *https://thehindu.com/crosswords*

SCAN TO PLAY



Across

1 Auditor's date with artificial silk - new material (8)
5 Sharp detectives on island about to withdraw (6)
9 Sweeping done holding centre of broom (8)
10 Whimper from KrisKross going through small story, missing love (6)
12 Trained poodle regularly acting as helper of the force (6,3)
13 Mathematician from Spain designed rule (5)
14 See 7d
16 Live with a friend touring Northern Italy (7)
19 Stylish spy killing a swimmer (7)
21 Stupid debate - "Trading money for diamonds" (4)
24 See 4d
25 Spooner says "Beat up sailors - they have lot of moolah!" (4,5)
27 Idol standing with foot loose on edge of table (6)
28 Bone initially broken in prison game (8)
29 Cuts posts reportedly (6)
30 Judges free mysterious sage from the East (8)

Down

1 Sibling has place in retreat for exercises (3-3)
2 Handsome man left during a game (6)
3 One overwhelmed by high cost becomes philosophical (5)
4 & 24 American saw rudest drunk consuming whiskey in bar (2,3,2,5)
6 Relaxing at home, about to cut cake (9)
7 & 14 Reckless wicked maiden breaking into nursery (5-3-4)
8 Dieter's concern about sign - "Contains traces of linseed oil" (8)
11 Part of India - grand city (4)
15 You and I stopping for business, filled with respect (9)
17 Braggarts bought sites, built houses (8)
18 Most inappropriate to touch dead snake (8)
20 Hair mesh (4)
21 Daughter dismissing first book's merit (7)
22 Breathe once with sound (6)
23 Idiots struggled from the beginning in test (6)
26 Anger over British sacred text (5)

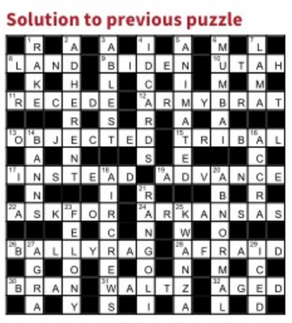
SUDOKU

	1							
3	5	7			6			8
		9		1		3	2	
		4		9				3
	3	8		5		2	9	
9				7		4		
	8	3		2		5		
4			5			6	8	9
							3	

No.SS6773 Distribution: www.knightfeatures.com

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆

Solution to previous puzzle



Solution to yesterday’s Sudoku

6	3	5	8	1	7	9	2	4
4	8	1	3	9	2	5	7	6
9	2	7	6	5	4	3	8	1
2	5	4	1	3	9	7	6	8
7	1	8	5	2	6	4	9	3
3	9	6	7	4	8	1	5	2
8	6	9	4	7	3	2	1	5
5	7	3	2	6	1	8	4	9
1	4	2	9	8	5	6	3	7

FAITH

Praise of Pundareekaksha

Thirumangai Azhvar has sung verses in praise of Lord Pundareekaksha, the presiding deity of Thiruvellarai. In these verses, he describes the various avataras of Lord Narayana. Besides the usual 10 avataras, he includes other avataras such as Hayagriva (the horse-faced form) and the Hamsa (swan) avatara. Even with regard to the dasavataras, he does not give them in the usual chronological order that is followed. He begins with Parasurama avatara and then praises Hayagriva, Narasimha, Krishna, Varaha, Kurma, Rama, Hamsa and Vamana. The penultimate verse among the Thiruvellarai verses is in praise of Vamana, said K.B. Devarajan in a discourse.

Addressing Lord Pundareekaksha, Thirumangai Azhvar says, “Oh Parama, You took the Vamana avatara. You then went to Mahabali’s yagna and asked for land measured with three steps of Your tiny feet. Bali wanted You to ask him for something befitting his status. But You wanted nothing more than the land You had asked for. When Mahabali granted You Your request, You grew taller, even as people watched. You recaptured all the wealth lost by Indra to Mahabali.”

Thirumangai Azhvar uses the word ‘parama’ to indicate Lord Narayana’s Supremacy. The Asoka trees in Thiruvellarai are in full bloom, says the Azhvar. In the final pasuram, Thirumangai Azhvar shows us that He is the primordial cause of the Universe. He uses the word ‘*aadhi*’ to show us that He is the One without beginning or end. The Azhvar promises that those who read the 10 pasurams that he has composed in praise of Pundareekaksha will attain liberation.

INBRIEF

Marico to buy snacking brand 4700BC from PVR for ₹227 cr.

Marico Ltd signed a pact with PVR Inox Ltd. to buy 93.27% stake in Zea Maize Private Ltd., that owns premium gourmet snacking brand 4700BC, for ₹227 crore. 4700BC is known for popcorn and snack offerings such as popped chips and nachos. Founded in 2013, 4700BC pioneered gourmet popcorn in India and has since built a strong presence through diverse snacking offerings across offline, online and institutional channels, including airlines and cinemas.

Home loans to drive business in coming quarters: IIFL MD

IIFL Finance's growth during the third quarter was led by a sharp recovery in gold loans, while management expects momentum in mortgages – home loans and loans against property – to pick up over the ensuing quarters, said MD Nirmal Jain. Home loan assets under management (AUM) grew by 5% to ₹31,893 crore while gold loan AUM surged 189% to ₹43,432 crore in the December quarter. These secured segments now account for a bulk of the loan book. PTI

Axis Bank Q3 net rises 3% to ₹6,490 crore, NPAs slide

Axis Bank Ltd., for the third quarter ended December 31, reported a 3% year-on-year (YoY) growth in net profit to ₹6,490 crore. Net interest income was ₹14,287 crore, up 5% YoY. Net interest margin was 3.64%. Gross NPA and Net NPA levels were 1.40% and 0.42% respectively against 1.46% and 0.44% as on September 30, 2025. Amitabh Chaudhry, MD & CEO, said, "We will keep strengthening competitive edge by modernising platforms and empowering teams."

Poll-bound States spent carefully while cutting debt

Amidst political criticism of Opposition-ruled States being fiscally irresponsible, data from RBI study of State budgets suggest otherwise; 'different States are in varied demographic stages'

Ashokamithran T.
MUMBAI

Positive move: A man speaks on his phone as he walks past the RBI logo inside its headquarters in Mumbai. REUTERS FILE

Poll-bound States reduced outstanding liabilities as a share of GSDP while keeping development expenditure intact, signalling fiscal prudence without compromising on welfare

According to data from the RBI State of State Finances report, Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu West Bengal and Puducherry, which are gearing up for elections in 2026, consistently reduced debt by up to 4 percentage points since 2021, when the respective political parties came to power.

Highest debt share

Among the five States, however, West Bengal has the highest share of debt to GSDP ratio at 39% as per Fiscal 2025-26 Budget Estimates, according to Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Study of State Budgets 2025. This was, however, down by 4.7 percentage points from 2021.

Kerala cut its outstanding liabilities by 4.8 per centage points to an estimated 35.5% of its Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP). Tamil Nadu's debt stood at 29.2% of the GSDP. Assam had 28% of GSDP in debt and Puducherry, a Union Territory, at 26% of GSDP in 2025-26.

The politicial parties in the respective States had come to power in the middle of the COVID lockdown, when economic activity was tepid and the governments prioritised mitigation measures over business-as-usual development activities.

Spending on social sector, capital outlay, development either dipped or was below the overall number

Above FRBM Act

While the States reduced the share of debt in comparison with the size of economies, the ratio continued to stay above the FRBM Act prescribed limit of 20%.

To be sure, the metric to measure borrowing of States has been consistently above the FRBM mark since 2016. RBI in its State budget study report said this was also consistent with the increase in global government debt burden.

Recent debates between political leaders in Tamil Nadu about the State's debt situation drew attention to the topic. While the critics used the nominal debt numbers to signify fiscal stress, representatives of ruling parties regularly rebutted saying this was not a problem as the money was spent on welfare and development.

To be sure, spending on development, social sector and capital outlay in the five States either declined a tad or stayed consistently below the overall number.

For instance, West Bengal, the most indebted of the lot, spent 10.3% of its GSDP on development expenditure in 2023-24.

In 2025-26, it budgeted this component at a higher 12% of its GSDP. Similarly, Kerala and Tamil Nadu have consistently maintained capital outlay as a share of GSDP at about 1% and 1.9% in the past three fiscals. Assam has spent not more than 11% of GSDP on social sector spending in the past three years.

Social service expenses

"All expenditures relating to revenue account, capital outlay and loans and advances are categorised into social services, economic services, and general services. While social and economic services constitute development expenditure, expenditure on general services is treated as non-development expenditure," the RBI said in its methodology note.

RBI also said while at the surface States are not in a crisis, different States are in varied demographic stages and that will have a disproportionate effect on fiscal pressure. Kerala and Tamil Nadu have a fifth of the population above the age of 60. "Youthful States may harness demographic dividend by strengthening human capital investments, intermediate States may balance growth priorities with early preparation for ageing and ageing States may enhance revenue capacity alongside healthcare, pension and workforce policy reforms," said the RBI in its study.

Sun Pharma, Cipla, Zydus, Graviti recall drugs in U.S. market

N. Ravi Kumar
HYDERABAD

Drugmakers Sun Pharma, Cipla, Zydus and Graviti Pharmaceuticals are recalling different products in the U.S., most of them over manufacturing issues, according to latest U.S FDA enforcement reports.

Sun Pharma is recalling 24,624 Fluocinolone Acetonide topical solution 60-mL bottles distributed by Taro Pharmaceuticals Inc. after out-of-specification result was obtained for a known impurity. It also initiated recall of acne drug Clindamycin Phosphate topical solution 60 mL bottle made by Taro on account of out-of-specification results for total impurities and for assay.

Cipla is recalling more than 15,000 syringes of Lanreotide Injection 120 mg/0.5 mL, used to treat a rare horomonal condition, made for Cipla USA, Inc.

Earlier this month, it said Greek firm Pharmathen was the manufacturer and exclusive supplier of Lanreotide Injection to its U.S. subsidiary. Production of Lanreotide has been temporarily paused to support remediation efforts in the wake of U.S. FDA inspection and issue of nine observations to Pharmathen's facility in Greece.

Cipla is recalling 92,376 tubes of Diclofenac Sodium Topical Gel 100 g made by DPT Laboratories for failed PH specifications.

Hyderabad-based Graviti Pharmaceuticals is recalling 4,212 bottles of Furosemide Tablets, (USP 40 mg, 1,000 Tablets) manufactured for Rising Pharmaceuticals Inc for presence of foreign substance.

Zydus Pharmaceuticals (USA) is recalling 22,896 bottles of Icosapent Ethyl capsules, 1 gm (120-count bottles) made by Softgel Healthcare on account of oxidation caused by leakage of capsule contents.

Gold crosses $5,000

Ashokamithran T.
MUMBAI

Spot gold prices in the global market crossed $5,000-mark for the first time, trumping doubts regarding the sustainability of the yellow-metal's rally.

The precious metal opened at $5,039. After briefly hovering around the day's low at $5,029.6 , it hit an intraday high of $5,111 before closing at $5,093. In Indian currency, gold hit ₹1.59 lakh before settling at about ₹1.55 lakh per ten grams on the Multi Commodity Exchange.

The rally in gold, which has risen more than 65% in 2025, was on the back of safe-haven demand.

THE HINDU GROUP

VIT®
Vellore Institute of Technology
(Deemed to be University under section 3 of UGC Act, 1956)

Presents

THE HINDU TECH SUMMIT 2026

Co-Presented by
sify

Technology, Disruption and the Road Ahead

February 12 & 13, 2026, Chennai

The Hindu Tech Summit 2026 brings together policymakers, corporates, technology leaders, academicians, and innovators to examine how emerging technologies are transforming business, governance, and society.

Over two days of panel discussions, fireside chats, and immersive experience zones, the summit spotlights how India can lead confidently through technological change driven by advances in AI, responsible data practices and resilient innovation.

For sponsorship queries, contact: 9841962820

Register today to join the panel as our speaker.
newsth.live/TCHSMSP

Knowledge Partner: CIO Association
Associate Partners: skylark, KBR, Tally POWER OF SIMPLICITY, virtusa
Realty Partner: G SQUARE PLOTS | VILLAS | APTS
TV Partner: புதிய தலைமுறை
Digital News Partner: THE FEDERAL VOICE OF THE STATES

A BG-BGE

YANGON

Military-backed party in Myanmar declares victory in junta-run polls

AP

Myanmar's dominant pro-military party has won junta-run polls, a party source said on Monday, after a month-long vote that critics dismissed as a rebranding of Army rule. "We won a majority already," a senior official from the Union Solidarity and Development Party said. Official results are expected this week. AFP

CARACAS

'Enough orders', says Venezuela interim leader amid U.S. pressure

AFP

Venezuela's acting President Delcy Rodriguez said on Sunday she had "enough" of orders from Washington, in reference to pressure from the U.S. "Enough orders from Washington in Venezuela. Let Venezuelan politics resolve our internal conflicts. Enough of foreign powers," Ms. Rodriguez said in an address to oil workers. AFP

WASHINGTON

U.S. aircraft carrier arrives in West Asia amid high tensions with Iran

FILE

The U.S aircraft carrier *USS Abraham Lincoln* and three warships have arrived in West Asia, bringing a renewed potential that President Donald Trump could opt to order air strikes on Iran over its crackdown on protesters. The squadron "is deployed to promote regional security and stability", U.S. Central Command said. AP

MANILA

18 killed, hundreds rescued after deadly ferry disaster in Philippines

AFP

A ferry with more than 350 people on board sank early on Monday near an island in the southern Philippines, killing at least 18 people, officials said. Rescuers saved hundreds more, while a fleet of coast guard and naval ships searched for those still missing. The cause of the sinking was not immediately clear. AP

Bangladesh former police chief gets death penalty for protest crackdown

Former Dhaka police commissioner, two other police officers sentenced to death in absentia; special tribunal finds them guilty of 'crimes against humanity' in the 2024 violent street protests that led to then Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's ouster

Press Trust of India
DHAKA

Former Dhaka police commissioner and two other police officers were on Monday sentenced to death by a special Bangladesh tribunal for their alleged role during the 2024 violent street protests that led to then Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's ouster.

A three-judge panel of Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT-BD) handed down the sentence to former Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP) commissioner Habibur Rahman, former DMP joint commissioner Sudip Kumar Chakraborty and additional deputy commissioner Mohammad Akhtarul Islam after their trial in absentia.

Changing tide: Protesters march to PM Sheikh Hasina's palace as army personnel stand guard in Dhaka on August 5, 2024. FILE PHOTO

This is the second verdict delivered by the restructured ICT-BD which earlier handed down the death penalty to deposed premier Ms. Hasina and then Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan Kamal.

"These three (convicts) had superior status over their subordinates and are liable for superior command responsibility. They are found guilty and hereby awarded a single sentence of death," the judgment said.

The tribunal also sentenced Dhaka's assistant police commissioner Mohammad Imrul to six years, inspector Arshad Hossain to four years and three constables Sujon Hossain, Imaj Hossain and Nasirul Islam to three-year prison terms.

The ICT-BD found the accused guilty of an incident in which six people were killed by police gunshots in Dhaka's Chankharpul area on August 5, 2024, the day the then government was toppled.

ICT-BD chief prosecutor Muhammad Tajul Islam expressed dissatisfaction over the "relatively lenient punishments" for those awarded jail terms. "Though it is customary to say 'much obliged' after any judgment of the court, we intend to file an appeal," he said.

In November, Ms. Hasina was sentenced to death in absentia by the ICT-BD for "crimes against humanity" over her government's brutal crackdown on student-led protests. In its verdict, the tribunal described the 78-year-old Awami League leader as the "mastermind and principal architect" of the violent repression that killed hundreds of protesters.

Trump sends top official to Minneapolis as unrest grows

Agence France-Presse
MINNEAPOLIS

U.S. President Donald Trump announced on Monday he is sending a top official to Minnesota as outrage grew over his administration's militarised immigration raids and the shooting dead of a second protester in Minneapolis.

Mr. Trump said that Tom Homan, his point man for border security, would arrive in the State later and "will report directly to me".

The high-profile assignment suggested that the 79-year-old Republican President is seeking to regain control over a rapidly deteriorating political and security situation.

Minneapolis has become ground zero in the clash between Mr. Trump and growing numbers of Americans over his nationwide immigration crackdown.

Tom Homan

A federal judge in Minneapolis was to consider on Monday whether the deployment of federal officers violates the State's sovereignty.

And in Congress, Democrats are threatening to hold up funding for the U.S. government unless immigration enforcement agencies are reformed.

Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), an agency under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), has been transformed under Mr. Trump into the country's most heavily funded law enforcement body.

A huge rally took place in bitter cold in Minneapolis on Friday to protest the raids and the point blank shooting by an ICE agent of protester Renee Good, a 37-year-old mother of three on January 7.

Then on Saturday, immigration agents gunned down Alex Jeffrey Pretti, also 37, after having already tackled him to the ground. Like Good, the intensive care unit nurse was a U.S. citizen.

New rallies erupted after his death in Minneapolis, New York and other major cities.

Leadership battles brew in Labour while Tories hit by second defection

Sriram Lakshman
LONDON

A leadership battle began brewing – again – in Westminster, with Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham being blocked by the Labour Party from running in a parliamentary by-election that could see him return to Westminster and challenge Prime Minister Keir Starmer.

Labour's governing body, its National Executive Council (NEC), voted 8-1 to deny Mr. Burnham permission to quit his post and run in the Gorton and Denton by-election next month. Mr. Starmer, a member of the NEC, also voted with the majority.

Andy Burnham

Electoral battles

'The governing party – like the opposition Conservative Party – has had to contend with Reform UK, the anti-immigration and nativist party which has been surging at the polls. Reactions to Labour's decision were mixed.

The Secretary of State for Scotland, Douglas Alexander, who is a Cabinet Minister, said not having a second mayoral election for Greater Manchester would save the party and public money and "months of psychodrama".

Mr. Alexander said the decision was more about "focus than factionalism" given that Labour faced looming electoral battles for the assemblies in Wales and Scotland and local elections in England, Scotland and Wales on May 7 this year.

"We need all our focus on those elections," Mr. Starmer said on Monday, defending the vote to block Mr. Burnham from running in the by-election. He said the Mayor was doing a "great" job in Manchester.

Left-wing Labour MP John McDonnell called the NEC decision "disgusting".

"If you think it strengthens you I tell you it will simply hasten your demise," he told Mr. Starmer in a message on X.

Mr. Burnham said he was "disappointed" with the NEC decision and concerned about the elections.

The media knew of the NEC decision before he did and that told "you everything you need to know about the way the Labour Party is being run these days", he said.

Another defection

Suella Braverman, former U.K. Home Secretary and Attorney General in the Conservative government, defected to Reform UK. The party now has 8 MPs in the U.K. Parliament.

The news comes days after her former colleague, Robert Jenrick, the shadow Justice Secretary defected from the Conservative Party to Reform.

"I feel like I've come home," Ms. Braverman, who is of Indian descent, said at a party rally, calling it the "honour of her life".

She said the Conservative Party would never take Britain out of the European Convention on Human Rights, despite leaders saying they would, as she praised on Reform leader Nigel Farage.

Security agreement with U.S. '100% ready' to be signed: Ukraine

Associated Press
VILNIUS

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Sunday that a U.S. security guarantees document for Ukraine is "100% ready" after two days of talks involving representatives from Ukraine, the U.S. and Russia.

Speaking to journalists in Vilnius, Mr. Zelenskyy said Ukraine is waiting for its partners to set a signing date, after which the document would go to the U.S. Congress and Ukrainian Parliament for ratification.

Mr. Zelenskyy also emphasized Ukraine's push for European Union membership by 2027, calling it an "economic security guarantee." The Kremlin has insisted that to reach a peace deal, Kyiv must withdraw its troops from the areas in the east that Russia annexed but has not fully captured.

Negotiators will return to the UAE on February 1 for the next round of talks, according to a U.S. official.

Deputy Registrar of Co-Operative Societies (Housing) Vellore Region,
Gandhi Nagar, Vellore-632006.
Vellore District. Tamilnadu

Co-operative Housing society Properties For Sale
E-TENDER NOTICE

1.	Tender Reference No.	KCTS/2/25-26
2.	Tender Id	2026_RCSH_646126_1
3.	Property Details	Online Tender are Invited by deputy Registrar of Co-operative (Housing) Societies, Vellore Region for the property belonging to The Katpadi Co-operative Township Society Ltd for Sale of Residential Plot Via E-tender portal
4.	Tender Document available	https://tntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app
5.	Bid Submission Starting Date and Time	26.01.2026 - 4.30 Pm
6.	Bid Submission Ending Date and Time	26.02.2026 - 4.30 Pm
7.	Bid Opening Date and Time	27.02.2026 - 4.30 Pm

DEPUTY REGISTRAR (HOUSING),
VELLORE REGION
VELLORE-632006.

Published by Vellore District Co-operative Union

THE HINDU GROUP
Get it at
Rs. 4,999/-
₹1,999/-
See what speaking English with confidence can look like!
6 LIVE classes:
1- hour each focusing on conversational language
6 one on one Coach Calls
On pronunciation, intonation, accent , followed by personalised feedback over 30 minutes.
131 short self-learning webisodes:
17- hour online learning content covering various aspects of speaking
The 6-Week Communication Blueprint
Week 1: Introducing Yourself | Week 2: Everyday English | Week 3: Being Formal | Week 4: Socialising | Week 5: Everyday Transactions | Week 6: Avoiding Common Grammatical Errors
Scan the QR code
Visit:
bit.ly/gencrash
STEP For General Communication
STEP

WAXING LYRICAL

India ending WC drought great for women's game: Devine

FILE PHOTO: EMMANUAL YOGINI

Sophie Devine felt that India ending its 50-over World Cup wait was great for women's cricket. "When you have a billion people, you are going to have a steady stream of talent. It was great for the women's game that India broke the drought. The chance is there for India to go on a similar run (Australia's streak)."

SAFETY FIRST

Shreyas to stay with squad for rest of series; Tilak to rejoin on Feb. 3

FILE PHOTO: K.R. DEEPAK

The BCCI selection committee has announced that Shreyas Iyer will remain with India's T20I squad for the last two matches against New Zealand in place of the injured Tilak Varma. Tilak is expected to link up with the squad in Mumbai on February 3, ahead of India's warm-up match for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup.

CARIBBEAN CHALLENGE

Hope at the helm as West Indies names squad for T20 World Cup

AFP

The West Indies squad for T20 World Cup: Shai Hope (Capt. & wk), Johnson Charles (wk), Roston Chase, Matthew Forde, Shimron Hetmyer, Jason Holder, Akeal Hosein, Shamar Joseph, Brandon King, Gudakesh Motie, Rovman Powell, Sherfane Rutherford, Quentin Sampson, Jayden Seales and Romario Shepherd.

DECISION PENDING

Pakistan keeps suspense alive over ICC T20 World Cup participation

AP

Pakistan on Monday kept the suspense alive over its participation in the upcoming men's T20 World Cup, deferring a final decision until at least Friday and contemplating a boycott of its marquee clash against co-host India in solidarity with Bangladesh, which was ousted from the tournament.

Top of the heap: Lancers pipped Royals in an exciting summit clash. BISWARANJAN ROUT

Hendrickx powers Lancers to HIL title

Royals' strikers find the opposition defence tough to crack; Toofans rally to beat HIL GC to finish third; Lakra named Player-of-the-Tournament

Y.B. Sarangi
BHUBANESWAR

Vedanta Kalinga Lancers rode on its Belgian drag-flicker Alexander Hendrickx's brace to edge out Ranchi Royals 3-2 in an exciting final and emerged champion in the Hockey India League at the Kalinga Stadium here on Monday.

Last year's sixth-place finisher Lancers' victory delighted a noisy and partisan house on the Republic Day as much as it thrilled their Aussie coach Jay Stacy on Australia Day. The winner took home ₹3 crore, and the runner-up ₹2 crore.

In a contest between a team that had scored the maximum number of goals and a side that had conceded the least, the host, trusting its defence and counters, drew first blood early as Hendrickx converted their second penalty corner with a low flick.

Royals relied on their attacking instincts and levelled the score. Yashdeep Siwach sent in a precise aerial ball from the left and Araijeet Singh Hundal brought it down to unleash a powerful shot and beat Krishan Pathak under the bar.

Lancers remained composed, valued their possession, switched flanks and successfully found holes in Royals' defence.

They earned six short corners in quick succession and struck twice to ensure a two-goal cushion before half-time.

Dilpreet Singh's spectacular hit off a rebound restored Lancers' lead before Hendrickx scored his second with a high and angled flick. Lancers worked hard to display their solid defence and keep Royals at bay in the third quarter.

Pathak and Co. blunted several Royals attacks, including four short corners, before Tom Boon reduced the margin in the closing moments.

Amandeep Lakra's brace helped Hyderabad Toofans record a come-from-behind 4-3 win over HIL GC in the third-place playoff. He was named the Player-of-the-Tournament.

The results: Final: Vedanta Kalinga Lancers 3 (Hendrickx 4-pc, 26-pc, Dilpreet 25-pc) bt Ranchi Royals 2 (Hundal 9, Boon 59-pc); **Third place:** Hyderabad Toofans 4 (Nilakanta 24, Lakra 30-pc, 53-pc, Anderson 33) bt HIL GC 3 (Ward 14 & 52, Russell 55-pc).

Sciver-Brunt hits WPL's first ton as MI beats RCB

Vivek Krishnan
VADODARA

There had been 10 individual scores of 90-plus in four seasons of the Women's Premier League. On Monday evening, Nat Sciver-Brunt (100 n.o., 57b, 16x4, 1x6) became the first in the competition to break the three-figure barrier.

The Mumbai Indians star, a befitting holder of the milestone, brought it up off 57 balls in the 20th over, taking the two-time champion to 199 for four against Royal Challengers Bengaluru at the Kotambi Stadium. The unbeaten knock set up a 15-run win for Harmanpreet Kaur and Co. despite Richa Ghosh's stunning 50-ball 90 (10x4, 6x6).

In pursuit of 200, RCB slipped to 35 for five in the sixth over. Richa battled gamely at No. 6, so much so that her side was in with a sniff towards the end. With RCB needing 59 runs off the last two overs and two wickets in hand, Richa smashed Amanjot Kaur's first three balls for maximums. Shreyanka Patil hit two fours in the 27-run penultimate over, bringing the equation down to 32 required off six balls. Richa kept swinging the bat hard before being dismissed by Amelia Kerr off the final ball.

Earlier, after MI was sent in to bat, Sciver-Brunt forged a breathtaking second-wicket stand of 131 runs, off 73 balls, with Hayley Matthews (56 and three for 10).

Once the field restrictions were eased, the pair of Sciver-Brunt and Matthews had to show some initiative and ingenuity. The England batter did so in the seventh over, backing away to hit Nadine de Klerk over mid-off.

When spin was introduced through Shreyanka, Sciver-Brunt nailed a cut that sped away to the cover boundary. When the bowler erred again in the over, the No. 3 unfurled another cut in the same region for the same result.

It left MI with nine wickets in hand for the final 10 overs, enabling Sciver-Brunt and Matthews to go on the rampage. They walloped 67 runs from overs 11 to 14 to render the RCB attack helpless.

While there was some respite for Smriti Mandhana's side once Lauren Bell castled the Barbadian – just 49 runs were conceded in the last five overs – Sciver-Brunt finished the innings in style for MI.

Raining runs: Sciver-Brunt shifted gears seamlessly after the 10-over mark while Richa nearly pulled off a heist. PTI

SCOREBOARD

MUMBAI INDIANS
Hayley Matthews b Bell 56 *(39b, 9x4)*, Sajeevan Sajana lbw b Bell 7 *(7b, 1x4)*, Nat Sciver-Brunt (not out) 100 *(57b, 16x4, 1x6)*, Harmanpreet Kaur c Voll b de Klerk 20 *(12b, 2x4, 1x6)*, Amanjot Kaur b Shreyanka 4 *(4b)*, Amelia Kerr (not out) 1 *(1b)*; Extras (lb-2, w-9): 11; Total (for four wkts. in 20 overs): 199.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-16 (Sajana, 2.2 overs), 2-147 (Matthews, 14.3), 3-189 (Harmanpreet, 18.4), 4-198 (Amanjot, 19.5).

RCB BOWLING
Bell 4-0-21-2, Sayali 4-0-42-0, Arundhati 3-0-36-0, de Klerk 4-0-40-1, Shreyanka 3-0-34-1, Radha 2-0-24-0.

ROYAL CHALLENGERS
Grace Harris c Rahila b Ismail 15 *(9b, 3x4)*, Smriti Mandhana c Poonam b Matthews 6 *(7b, 1x4)*, Georgia Voll c Rahila b Matthews 9 *(6b, 2x4)*, Gautami Naik b Ismail 1 *(2b)*, Radha Yadav c Ismail b Matthews 0 *(2b)*, Richa Ghosh c Sanskriti b Kerr 90 *(50b, 10x4, 6x6)*, Nadine de Klerk c Sciver-Brunt b Kerr 28 *(20b, 3x4, 1x6)*, Arundhati Reddy c & b Amanjot 14 *(18b, 1x4)*, Sayali Satghare run out 0 *(1b)*, Shreyanka Patil (not out) 12 *(5b, 3x4)*; Extras (lb-3, w-6): 9; Total (for nine wkts. in 20 overs): 184.

FALL OF WICKETS
1-20 (Harris, 2.1), 2-26 (Smriti, 3.1), 3-31 (Voll, 3.5), 4-31 (Gautami, 4.1), 5-35 (Radha, 5.1), 6-77 (de Klerk, 11.1), 7-129 (Arundhati, 16.5), 8-129 (Sayali, 16.6), 9-184 (Richa, 19.6).

MUMBAI INDIANS BOWLING
Ismail 4-0-25-2, Sciver-Brunt 4-0-43-0, Matthews 2-0-10-3, Amanjot 4-0-51-1, Vaishnavi 2-0-15-0, Kerr 4-0-37-2.

Toss: RCB; **PoM:** Sciver-Brunt.
Mumbai Indians won by 15 runs.

Today's match

GUJARAT GIANTS vs DELHI CAPITALS

Vadodara, 7.30 p.m.

HEAD-TO-HEAD

Played: 7

GG 3 | DC 4

LIVE ON STAR SPORTS 1 & JIOHOTSTAR

Suryakumar's men send a loud warning

NZ IN INDIA

S. Dipak Ragav
CHENNAI

With less than two weeks to go for the T20 World Cup, India sent a loud warning to the other contenders that it is the overwhelming favourite.

In a format as fickle as T20, consistency is hard to achieve.

But the reigning world champion has managed to do just that over two years, winning every bilateral assignment since the 2024 triumph.

In fact, India's last T20I series reversal came in 2023 against the West Indies, and it has now won 11 out of its last 12 encounters (the other was drawn 1-1 against South Africa).

Seamless transition

After its second T20 World Cup victory, the Men in Blue ensured a seamless transition of players following the retirements of stalwarts Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli and Ravindra Jadeja.

Suryakumar Yadav was put in charge, and he has guided the side to seven consecutive series/tournament triumphs, including the ongoing assignment against New Zealand and Asia Cup (2025).

The Men in Blue won every bilateral assignment since the 2024 triumph
India's last T20I series reversal came in 2023 against the West Indies, and it has now won 11 out of its last 12 rubbers (the other was drawn 1-1 against South Africa)

Marauding line-up

In the first three matches against the Black Caps, the depth of India's talent pool was on display, led by its marauding batting line-up.

If Abhishek Sharma and Rinku Singh helped set up a big total in the first game, the batters, barring opener Sanju Samson, made a mockery of the targets in the subsequent encounters.

Whirlwind knocks

In Raipur, the hosts overhauled 209 with more than four overs to spare, riding on Ishan Kishan and Suryakumar's whirlwind knocks.

In Guwahati on Sunday, the Men in Blue thrashed New Zealand by eight wickets, knocking off 154 in just 10 overs to reaffirm their billing as the top-ranked side in the world.

Eleventh-hour injury to Tilak Varma has allowed the think-tank to provide opportunities and valuable game time to Kishan, who was recalled as a top-order cover for Samson.

And the left-handed wicketkeeper-batter has quickly hit the ground running, playing two impactful knocks.

Concern

There is one concern, though – Samson's dip in form.

The 31-year-old was once made to drop down the order but has since been restored as a first-choice opener.

Leeway for Samson

Considering that the rest of the batting unit is firing on all cylinders, the management might be inclined to give Samson some leeway to find his feet again.

If the Kerala batter rediscovers his mojo in the next two games, India will feel it has ticked almost every box in its preparatory list.

Packing a punch: Suryakumar and Abhishek have been in rollicking form. RITU RAJ KONWAR

BCCI to streamline Annual Central Contracts system

Ayon Sengupta
Shayan Acharya
GUWAHATI

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is set to streamline its Annual Central Contracts system and suspend the A-plus category for now, a move secretary Devajit Saikia said was prompted by Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma stepping away from Tests and T20Is to play only ODIs.

"The plan will go ahead very soon. We are removing one category because the players who were eligible for the A-plus category are now playing just one of the three formats.

"The criteria we have set to qualify a player for A-plus are not being fulfilled," Saikia told *Sportstar*.

As per the existing policy, a cricketer in the A-plus category is paid ₹7 crore annually, while those in Category-A receive ₹5 crore, ₹3 crore in Category- B, and ₹1 crore in Category C. In the yet-to-be-announced retainers for 2025-26, players will be bracketed into only Categories A, B, and C. Only four players – Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, Jasprit Bumrah, and Ravindra Jadeja – were in the A-plus category last season, and Bumrah is now the only all-format player among them. Kohli and Rohit play only ODIs, while Jadeja remains part of the Test and ODI set-up, having retired from T20Is.

"Some of the players who were in that A-plus bracket have decided not to play in all three formats. Therefore, there are not enough players remaining to qualify and fulfil the eligibility criteria," Saikia said.

"A one-format player will not be eligible for A-plus, so that's why we had to take a call. There is no heartburn." However, it is understood that there will be no pay cut for Bumrah.

Devajit Saikia, BCCI secretary. RITU RAJ KONWAR

IPL in Bengaluru?

The BCCI is expected to decide whether Royal Challengers Bengaluru (RCB) will be able to play its home games at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium this season, in the next couple of days.

"During the last meeting, we were informed that the association has produced one document, which says that the government has set some conditions which should be fulfilled.

"There will be an inspection after that, and once it is given the green signal then only the crowd manifest can be made," Saikia said.

"There are certain gray areas. So we have requested them to come up with a complete proposition. In the next (couple of) days, we are having another meeting to decide whether the Chinnaswamy Stadium will be ready for hosting the IPL or not".

INBRIEF

Bihar wins Ranji Trophy Plate final, returns to Elite

Bihar rode on opener Piyush Singh's 216 in the second innings to hammer Manipur by 568 runs in the Ranji Trophy Plate final in Patna, sealing a triumphant return to the Elite Group on Monday. Bihar had briefly broken into the Elite Group in the 2022-23 season before slipping back to Plate in 2024-25. Bihar had also secured promotion to the Elite League in the Vijay Hazare Trophy.

The scores: Bihar 522 & 505/6 decl. in 119.3 overs (Piyush Singh 216 n.o., Raghuvendra Pratap Singh 90) bt Manipur 264 & 195 in 56.1 overs (Pheiroijam Jotin 74).

Subhathra scores seven goals in Karnataka's thumping win

A. Subhathra scored seven goals as Karnataka defeated Andaman by a whopping 19-0 margin in the South Zone qualifying round of the under-13 Asmitha-Khelo India zonal football league in Bengaluru on Sunday.

The results: Karnataka 19 (A. Subhathra 2, 5, 6, 20, 25, 28, 46, Rukshana 9, Anvi Joshi 13, 44, Tvisha Amaresh Kulkarni 16, 23, Gouri Ningana Gouda Patil 17, Anya Saxena 18, Richa Bhatia 19, 49, V.R. Pranitha 21, Ira Singh Kapany 36, 47) bt Andaman 0.

Kerala 8 (U. Diya 3, 20, 27, 39, 47, E.A. Shazana 22, Aadiya Dinesh 25, 49) bt Pondicherry 1 (S. Sebiya 5).

Srishti clinches her fourth consecutive singles title

Thirteen year-old Srishti Kiran continued her impressive run on the junior circuit as she clinched her fourth consecutive singles title, at the ITF World Tennis Tour Juniors J30 tournament in Huamantla, Mexico recently. In the most recent final, Srishti beat Canada's Natalie Tsatsalashvili 6-4, 6-1 to add to her three other ITF crowns in Huamantla, Cabarete and Sosua (both in Dominican Republic held in October-November 2025). Srishti also played doubles at all four events, winning the title in Cabarete, and coming up with runner-up and semifinal finishes at the two Huamantla events.

Sinner and Shelton cruise into the last eight; Pegula dethrones Keys

Italian edges closer to Djokovic clash; Musetti battles past Fritz as heatwave hits Melbourne; Swiatek makes short work of Inglis, meets Rybakina next

Day 9 in numbers

1 The top six seeds among men and women reached the quarterfinals at a Grand Slam for the first time

1 Pegula (31y 328d) becomes the oldest American woman to defeat a reigning Major champion, eclipsing Serena's record (31y 243d, Roland-Garros 2013)

2 Pegula is the oldest woman to reach consecutive quarterfinals without dropping a set at Slams after Serena (Australian Open 2017)

4 Only Sabalenka (10) and Gauff (six) have made more Major quarterfinals than Rybakina (four) without dropping a set since the Kazakh reached her first at Roland-Garros 2021

4 The number of American women who have progressed to the last-eight stage of the Melbourne Major for the first time since 2001 (Serena, Venus, Capriati, Seles and Davenport)

6 The 24-year-old Swiatek is the youngest woman to enter the quarterfinals of six successive Slams since Serena (Roland-Garros 2002 to Wimbledon 2003)

18 Sinner has pulled level with Courier (1992-94) for the fifth-longest winning streak among men at the Australian Open

33 Swiatek has won a set by a 6-0 scoreline 33 times in Slams. Since her Major debut in 2019, the Pole has 22 more than the next best (Sabalenka and Gauff, 11 each)

50 Swiatek is the youngest to register 50 hard court wins at Grand Slams since Wozniacki (US Open 2014)

Compiled by ANIRUDH VELAMURI

AUSTRALIAN OPEN

Agence France-Presse
MELBOURNE

Jannik Sinner sent a strong statement by rolling into the quarterfinals on Monday but fellow champion Madison Keys was dethroned as Melbourne braced for forecast 45 degress Celsius heat.

Fifth seed Lorenzo Musetti battled stifling conditions to set up a last-eight showdown with Novak Djokovic and six-time major champion Iga Swiatek progressed in rampant fashion.

Two-time defending champion Sinner raced to a 6-1, 6-3, 7-6(2) victory over fellow Italian and close friend Luciano Darderi.

The second seed plays the United States' all-action eighth seed Ben Shelton after he beat Norway's 12th-seeded Casper Ruud in four sets.

Djokovic and Sinner are on course for a blockbuster last-four showdown.

In another clash between compatriots and friends, Jessica Pegula defeated title-holder Keys, 6-3, 6-4.

The Americans host a tennis podcast together, "The Player's Box", and had even been planning to record an episode on the eve of their match.

All that was put aside as a clinical Pegula dominated to set up a last-eight encounter with another American in fourth seed Amanda Anisimova.

Anisimova, beaten finalist at last year's US Open and Wimbledon, cooled herself off with bags of ice before taming China's Wang Xinyu 7-6(4), 6-4.

Pegula, the sixth seed, is chasing an elusive Grand Slam title aged 31, her best performance to date reaching the US Open final in 2024.

An erratic Keys made 27 unforced errors to Pegula's 17 and fired down six double faults as her title defence folded.

The forfeit, as a part of a jokey bet with Pegula, will be a slice of apple pie with melted cheddar cheese on top.

Fifth seed Elena Rybakina dismantled 21st seed Elise Mertens of Belgium 6-1, 6-3 and will play second seed Swiatek.

The Pole demolished home qualifier Maddison Inglis 6-0, 6-3 as she closes on a first Australian crown, having won all three of the other majors.

In the last match of the day on Rod Laver Arena, Shelton defeated father-to-be Ruud 3-6, 6-4, 6-3, 6-4, letting out an almighty roar in victory.

Melbourne Park king Djokovic was supposed to face the 20-year-old Jakub Mensik in the night match.

But the Czech player pulled out injured on Sunday, sending 10-time champion Djokovic into the last eight without hitting a ball.

The 38-year-old Serb will play Musetti after the Italian defeated American ninth seed Taylor Fritz 6-2, 7-5, 6-4.

Djokovic has won nine of their 10 previous meetings, but Musetti said: "I feel ready to try to push him to his maximum."

Yuki bows out

India's challenge came to an end on Sunday after Yuki Bhambri and his Swedish partner Andre Goransson bowed out in the third round of the men's doubles, here.

Bhambri and Goransson went down 6-7(7), 3-6 to Brazil's unseeded pairing of Orlando Luz and Rafael Matos in a close match.

THE RESULTS

Fourth round: Men: 5-Musetti (Ita) bt 9-Fritz (USA) 6-2, 7-5, 6-4; 2-Sinner (Ita) bt 22-Darderi (Ita) 6-1, 6-3, 7-6(2.
; 8-Shelton (USA) bt 12-Ruud (Nor) 3-6, 6-4, 6-3, 6-4.
Women: 6-Pegula (USA) bt 9-Keys (USA) 6-3, 6-4;
4-Anisimova (USA) bt Xinyu (Chi) 7-6(4), 6-4; 5-Rybakina (Kaz) bt 21-Mertens (Bel) 6-1, 6-3;
2-Swiatek (Pol) bt Inglis (Aus) 6-0, 6-3.
Men's doubles (third round): Matos & Luz (Bra) bt 10-Yuki (Ind) & Goransson (Swe) 7-6(7), 6-3.

Tuesday's picks

WOMEN
1-Sabalenka vs 29-Jovic
3-Gauff vs 12-Svitolina

MEN
1-Alcaraz vs 6-De Minaur
3-Zverev vs 25-Tien

Chandigarh battles to deny Karnataka a victory

Sports Bureau
BENGALURU

Chandigarh fought hard to deny Karnataka a win on the final day of their Col. C.K. Nayudu Trophy (U-23) clash at the Alur ground here on Monday.

Beginning the day on an overnight 55/3 in their second innings, the visitors, who were adrift by a massive 296 runs, refused to fold and allowed the home side to take just three points. Chandigarh battled for 88 overs and added 195 runs but crucially lost only three wickets.

No. 3 batter Raghav Verma played a big role, scoring an unbeaten 120 (335b, 19x4), and found able allies in captain Aarush Bhandari (37, 138b), Nikhil (21, 82b) and Adhiraj (21, 29b). Offspinner Mohsin Khan (4/73), who had claimed eight wickets in the first innings, gave Karnataka a glimmer of hope by dismissing Aarush, Nikhil and Adhiraj.

However, No. 8 Sahil Kumar stonewalled for 67 balls to ensure that Raghav's effort didn't go in vain. Despite the result, Karnataka tops Elite Group D with 39 points from four matches, and it will next play Uttarakhand away from February 6 to 9.

The scores: Karnataka 634/4 in 138.2 overs drew with Chandigarh 283 in 107 overs & 250/6 in 116 overs (Raghav Verma 120 n.o., Mohsin Khan 4/73).

RWF puts it across AGORC

Sports Bureau
BENGALURU

S. Rajesh scored a brace as RWF FC defeated AGORC FC 4-1 in the BDFA A-division football league championship on Monday.

The results:

Bangalore Eagles 1 (Shivakumar 35) bt Blitz 0.

RWF 4 (S. Rajesh 27, 52, R. Daniel 30, Jayavandan Sigamani 45) bt AGORC 1 (Arun Pandey 45+4).

Roots 2 (S. Karthi 60, Thangkaihao Haokip 67) bt Income Tax 1 (Darin Marcel Christopher 30).

SNAPSHOTS

Roma holds AC Milan

ROME: AC Milan's title hopes suffered a blow as it was held to a 1-1 draw by AS Roma in a rain-soaked clash on Sunday that left Inter Milan five points clear at the top of the Serie A standings. Second-placed Milan moved to 47 points, while Roma climbed to third on 43, level with Napoli.

Top results: LaLiga: Alaves 2 (Vicente 3, Martinez 47) bt Real Betis 1 (Abde 90+5).

Serie A: Juventus 3 (David 22, Yildiz 77, Kostic 86) bt Napoli 0; Roma 1 (Pellegrini 74-pen) drew with AC Milan 1 (De Winter 62).

Indians claim five gold medals

DOHA: India won five golds in the World Table Tennis Youth Star Contender on Sunday. Syndrela Das and Divyanshi Bhowmick emerged winners in under-19 girls' doubles while P.B. Abhinandh and Divyanshi bagged gold in under-19 mixed doubles. Ahona Ray won the u-15 girls' singles and Aditya Das and Ankolika Chakraborty finished first in u-15 mixed doubles. Akash Rajavelu and Rishaan Chattopadhyay came on top in under-15 boys' doubles.

BCCI mourns Bindra's death

NEW DELHI: The BCCI on Monday expressed deep sorrow at the demise of its former president I.S. Bindra and described him as a "visionary administrator" and one of the most "influential architects" of Indian cricket. "Mr Bindra was a visionary administrator whose leadership helped redefine India's role in world cricket," BCCI chief Mithun Manhas said.

Thunders on top

NOIDA: Haryana Thunders won its third match in four outings to go top of the table with a 6-3 win over Tiigers of Mumbai Dangals in Match 11 of Pro Wrestling League. Haryana has 23 bout wins to second-placed Maharashtra Kesari's 19 despite being level on points even as Mumbai remains winless. Iryna Koliadenko set a new record for quickest win of the season, beating Sarika Malik in 62kg in 28s.

The results: Haryana Thunders beat Tiigers of Mumbai Dangals 6-3 [Men: 57kg: Aman Sehrawat (Tiigers of Mumbai Dangals) bt Ankush Chandram (Haryana Thunders) 13-4; **65kg:** Tumur Ochir Tulga (Haryana Thunders) bt Rohit Rahal (Tiigers of Mumbai Dangals) 13-0; **74kg:** Deepak (Tiigers of Mumbai Dangals) bt Parvinder (Haryana Thunders) 10-6; **86kg:** Mukul Dahiya (Tiigers of Mumbai Dangals) bt Sachin (Haryana Thunders) 13-0; **125kg:** Anirudh Gulia (Haryana Thunders) bt Oleksandr Khotsianivskyi (Tiigers of Mumbai Dangals) 3-2; **Women: 53kg:** Yui Susaki (Haryana Thunders) bt Jyoti (Tiigers of Mumbai Dangals) 7-0; **57kg:** Neha (Haryana Thunders) bt Pushpa (Tiigers of Mumbai Dangals) 18-3; **62kg:** Iryna Koliadenko (Haryana Thunders) bt Sarika Malik (Tiigers of Mumbai Dangals) 16-0; **76kg:** Kajal (Haryana Thunders) bt Jyoti (Tiigers of Mumbai Dangals) by Fall 10-2.].

Gukesh beats Fedoseev

WIJK AAN ZEE: D. Gukesh put it across Vladimir Fedoseev of Slovenia in the eighth round of Tata Steel Masters on Monday.

The results: Seventh round: Hans Moke Niemann (USA, 4) drew with Jorden van Foreest (Ned, 4); Aravindh Chithambaram (Ind, 2.5) drew with Arjun Erigaisi (Ind, 3.5); Vladimir Fedoseev (Slo, 4) lost to D. Gukesh (Ind, 4); Yagiz Kaan Erdogmus (Tur, 4.5) drew with R. Praggnanandhaa (Ind, 3); Vincent Keymer (Ger, 4) drew with Javokhir Sindarov (Uzb, 5); Thai Dai Van Nguyen (Cze, 3) drew with Matthias Bluebaum (Ger, 4); Anish Giri (Ned) bt Nodirbek Abdusattorov (Uzb).

Padikkal takes over captaincy as Karnataka rings in the changes

RANJI TROPHY

Sports Bureau
BENGALURU

Karnataka's dispiriting 217-run home defeat to Madhya Pradesh in the Ranji Trophy last week has triggered an avalanche of changes, with the removal of Mayank Agarwal from captaincy the chief among them.

Devdutt Padikkal will be at the helm for the last group-stage encounter against Punjab beginning this Thursday.

It will be a high-stakes match for Karnataka (21 points), for the eight-time Ranji champion is now involved in a four-way fight with Maharashtra (24), Madhya Pradesh (22) and Saurashtra (19) for two knockout berths.

Mayank's struggles

Mayank has not been in good form this Ranji season, totalling just 298 runs from nine innings.

Amit Verma, who took over as chief selector just last month, stated that the decision was made to unburden the 34-year-old and help him focus on his batting.

For Padikkal, 25, the first foray into the leadership role will be a big step up.

He was in scintillating form in the Vijay Hazare Trophy, scoring 725 runs at an average of 90.62.

But in the semifinal against Vidarbha, he made just four, and he was out for a pair versus Madhya Pradesh.

It also remains to be seen if Karnataka sees Padikkal as the long-term option. Though Verma said that he was not a stop-gap arrangement, the southpaw has been part of India's red-ball set-up in recent times and is a regular in the India-A outfits. A skipper who goes in and out of the squad may not always be ideal.

Padikkal.
FILE PHOTO: K. MURALI KUMAR

For Padikkal, 25, the first foray into the leadership role will be a big step up. He was in scintillating form in the Vijay Hazare Trophy, scoring 725 runs at an average of 90.62. But in the semifinal against Vidarbha, he made just four, and he was out for a pair versus MP

Rahul in squad

Among the other changes ahead of the Punjab game is the return of National team players K.L. Rahul and Prasidh Krishna, and R. Smaran. Left-hander Smaran, who has amassed 595 runs this Ranji edition, sat out both the Vijay Hazare semifinal and Madhya Pradesh fixture with shoulder niggle.

Karnataka will however miss the services of Karun Nair (614 runs), who split his webbing against Madhya Pradesh and was unable to bat in the second innings. Speedster V. Vyshak, who sustained a hamstring injury, is also unavailable.

The out-of-form Abhinav Manohar (231 runs) has been dropped for talented youngster Dhruv Prabhakar.

The squad:

Devdutt Padikkal (Capt.), Mayank Agarwal, K.L. Rahul, K.V. Aneesh, R. Smaran, Shreyas Gopal, Kruthik Krishna, M. Venkatesh, Vidyadhar Patil, Vidwath Kaverappa, Prasidh Krishna, Mohsin Khan, Shikhar Shetty, K.L. Shrijith & Dhruv Prabhakar.

Mel Hussain takes strike again at 'home away from home'

S. Shrivathsan
CHENNAI

Chennai was home to the Hussain siblings in the 1960s and 70s, a place where the brothers built the initial blocks for their future.

It is why a mere mention of the southern metropolis was enough to evoke the emotions of Mel Hussain, the elder brother of former England captain Nasser Hussain.

"I find it difficult to adapt. I understand why the name was changed, but it is still 'Madras' to me," Mel, a former English First Class cricketer, told *The Hindu* on Monday.

Born to an Indian father and English mother, Mel spent the formative years of his life in Chennai before his family shifted base to the United Kingdom.

The 62-year-old is back at his 'home away from home' for the England Lions 60s tour of India, which includes six matches in Chennai and Puducherry between January 27 and February 3.

"I lived here for close to 13 years, so I always get excited when I come back to Chennai. Everything about Chennai brings back fantastic memories. Right after landing here, the first thing I did was have a masala dosa. I miss it so badly when I am in England. I speak a bit of Tamil, and I still have family members living here," added Mel.

Going strong: Mel Hussain is part of the England Lions 60s team that will play six matches. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

> I always get excited when I come back to Chennai. Everything about Chennai brings back fantastic memories

During the interaction, the sexagenarian could not help but recall the memorable time he enjoyed with former India internationals at the M.A. Chidambaram Stadium.

"Chepauk was second home to me. It was different back then; we had a beautiful clubhouse and garden. I played for a phenomenal Madras Cricket Club side led by S. Venkataraghavan [during his teens]. It was great to play with the likes of Venkataraghavan, K. Srikkanth, L. Sivaramakrishnan, Robin Singh, Bharath Reddy and T.A. Sekar," Mel said.

Mel, despite being in his 60s, has not left cricket and cricket has not left him either. When he enters the field on Tuesday, he will take a trip down memory lane.

LIVE TELECAST

Men's U-19 World Cup: Zimbabwe vs India, SS Select 2 & JioHotstar, 1 p.m.

Australian Open: Sony Sports Ten 2, 3, 5 & LIV, 1.30 p.m. & 5.30 a.m. (Wednesday)

Sri Lanka vs England: 3rd ODI, Sony Sports Ten 1 & LIV, 2.30 p.m.

WPL: Star Sports 1 & JioHotstar, 7.30 p.m.

PWL: Sony Sports Ten 5 & LIV, 8 p.m.

A BG-BGE